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A
HISTORY OF METHODISM

IN THE
181
NEIGHBOURHOOD

AND
CITY OF LINCOLN ;

INCLUDING A SKETCH OF EARLY METHODISM IN THE
COUNTY OF LINCOLN.

BY A. WATMOUGH.

“And Nathaniel said unto him, Can there any good thing
come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and
see.”—John i. 46.

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COMMUNICATION

CITY OF LINCOLN

TO THE HONORABLE THE SENATE

AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE STATE OF NEBRASKA

Wes. 150

PREFACE.

EITHER the subject of the following pages is important or not; if the latter, then some hundreds and thousands of persons in the County of Lincoln have acted unwisely in lavishing their time and bestowing so much property upon it during a considerable number of years: But if it is important, the time, talents, and property, bestowed in establishing and promoting it, have been wisely employed, and a faithful record thereof will be read with interest by every person who is strongly and from principle attached to the Wesleyan cause.

My principal reason for writing upon it is as follows : The subject itself is of an interesting nature, and calculated to suggest lessons of importance, in matters of religion, and to warm the hearts of the pious with gratitude and love to God. It appears also, if I rightly understand some portion of the Scriptures, (see Psalm lxxviii. 5,) to be the duty of the Churches of Christ to preserve some memorials of the *works of God*, done in their own days ; and such memorials as may be handed down to their children, *‘that the generations may know them, even the children which shall be born ; who shall,’* in like manner, *‘arise and declare them to their children ;’* so that I cannot conceive how this can be omitted without sin.

In drawing up the following narrative, I have endeavoured to make it a History of Methodism, rather than of Methodists ; and for this reason I have generally avoided the names of persons

who have been concerned in the work,
except such as are dead, and gone to
their reward.

HISTORY OF METHODISM, &c.

PART THE FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

Early Methodism in Lincolnshire.

WHEN the venerable Wesley, and those holy men who came forward to help him in preaching the Gospel, had laboured ten years in various parts in the three kingdoms, that is, from A. D. 1739, when the first Methodist Society was formed in London, to A. D. 1749, they had twenty Circuits in England, seven in Ireland, two in Scotland, and two in the Principality of Wales.

At that period all Lincolnshire, and part of Nottinghamshire, were one of those Circuits; and, it seems probable, not more than two travelling preachers, at the same time, were appointed to cultivate that wide and barren spot of ground.

Hence it will appear, that the number of Methodist sermons and means of grace must have been small, and widely scattered among the people: It is not, therefore, surprising to learn, that, in some instances, members of the society were known to walk regularly fourteen or fifteen miles a week in order to meet in class. Yet scanty as the supply of

preaching, and the other means of grace, was, good had already been effected in various places in Lincolnshire; so that when Mr. Thomas Mitchell, in 1751, was appointed to the Lincolnshire Circuit, he found 'a serious people, and a door open for the word of life.'

Methodism in Lincolnshire had many adversaries in those days. If I record one circumstance only, it will be sufficient for my purpose; which is to furnish some idea of the spirit which opposed itself to Methodism in those early times. It took place on Sunday the seventh day of August, 1751, and Wrangle, near Boston, was the scene of the affray.

Mr. Thomas Mitchell, named above, begun preaching about 5 o'clock that morning, and about six the constables came at the head of a large mob, who violently broke into the place, and, pulling down the preacher, put an end to their devotions. Then, dragging Mr. Mitchell to the public house, they kept him in custody till four o'clock in the afternoon, when one of the constables, seeming to relent, said, He would go to the Minister, and see if they might then release him. But, returning with directions *not to let him go yet*, they took him out to the mob, who hurried him to a pool, deep enough to take him to the neck, and threw him right in. Several times he attempted to get out of his perilous situation; but they as often pitched him in again, and so rendered his efforts vain. They insisted on his wading through the pool seven times; and, seeing no alternative, he complied with the request. They now permitted him to come out. But as soon as he had done so, a ruffian, standing ready with a pot of white paint, and a brush, painted him over from head to foot. In

this state he was conducted to the public house again, and made prisoner a second time, where we shall leave him for a moment to muse on his fate.

In the mean while the mob proceeded to abuse Mr. Mitchell's friends, beating them shamefully, and greatly damaging their goods. They moreover seized on five of them, and dragging them away, threw them also into the pool, and so returned to Mr. Mitchell again.

In or near the place was a great pond of water, ten or twelve feet deep, and railed in on every side. To the side of this pit, wet and weary as he was, they dragged the preacher, and four of them seizing his legs and arms, began to swing him to and fro, in order to throw him in. 'And now,' says he, 'my flesh, for a moment, shrunk at the thought of that instant death which seemed to await me.' But while in this critical situation, his tremulous feelings instantly left him! and he felt he could say, 'The will of the Lord be done.' At that instant they precipitated him in as far as they could.

The violence of the fall, and the water together, soon took his senses away from him, so that while in the water he was conscious of nothing; and, it can only be attributed to the special Providence of God, controlling the minds of some of these men, that he escaped alive from that terrible place.

Several of the persecutors became unwilling to see him die in the water; and so, watching until he rose to the surface, caught hold of his clothes with a long pole, pulled him out, and left him lying on the beach. After some time he came to himself a little, and found only two men standing by

him. One of these, very kindly, began to assist him, lifting him up, and desiring him to go with him; and so, leading him to a cottage, treated him in a hospitable manner, and put him to bed.

But, repenting of their clemency, the mob pursued him to this hospitable retreat; and, as there were none who could effectually resist, dragged him again, exhausted as he was, out of bed into the street, swearing they would take one of his limbs, except he would promise never to visit that place again. But, though the body of this man of God was in the hands of his enemies, his mind was beyond their dominion and controul. He had waded the pool at their instance, because he could do it without sin; but, to promise what now was demanded, was a concern of a different nature; and his soul was too manly, and too christian, to comply. Another person, however, who had hold of Mr. Mitchell, clinging to him to help him, promised for him; and the mob, pretending to be satisfied, let him go, and the man, who had treated him so kindly before, took him, and put him to bed again.

But some of the mob now repaired to the Minister again, (who is said to have sat in the steeple, witnessing the scene,) for further direction and advice; and, returning with orders to 'take him out of the Parish,' they pulled him again from the bed, wrapped him in an old coat, his own being wet and covered with paint, and, taking him about a mile from the place, selected a hill; upon which when they had set him, they gave three cheers, as if they had gained some notable victory; and, at each of the cheers, cried out, 'God save the King, and the Devil take the preacher.' And

thus they left him, without a penny in his pocket, and without a friend, none daring to come near him. If the reader wish to see a more ample account of this affair, he may consult the Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, vol. iii. p. 97, 8vo. edition, printed in 1809; and also vols. iii. and xxv. of the Arminian or Methodist Magazine; articles, Mr. Mitchell, and John Gilbert, of Wrangle.

Another affair of the like nature, and not much inferior to the preceding, took place at Boston, when Mr. Mather travelled in Lincolnshire, in those early days of Methodism. But as I only propose a sketch of the beginnings of Methodism in these parts, the particulars of it must be withheld. Suffice it to say, that, in many places, the heathen raged, and compassed the rising cause like bees; and to the lovers of Methodism, it is matter of pleasing reminiscence, that they could not accomplish the object of their will.

Notwithstanding the storms that then blew, and the chilling aspect of things, Societies were raised in different parts of the County, as the following statement will sufficiently shew.

In 1758, seven years after the affair at Wrangle, Mr. Thomas Lee was appointed for Lincolnshire, whose plan of labour was this:—He spent two months on the eastern side of the County, preaching in different places, and superintending the affairs of the little Societies; and then two months, in like manner, on the west. He says nothing of any helper or colleague in these labours, though, it is probable, he had *one*; and the manner of his changing from east to west every two months, appears to prove, he had no more. His labours, on

this extensive field, were successful; and the testimony he has left of the Societies, does equal credit to him and to them. They were 'loving and teachable,' says he; and, as a proof that in all other respects they gave him entire satisfaction, he says, 'I know not if I shall ever love a people better on this side eternity.' See *Arminian Magazine*, vol. iii. p. 141.

The reader must here recollect, that this testimony relates, not to one Society or people, in some one particular place; but to all the Societies, as they were then scattered over the face of the County at large, and from which the numerous Societies now in extence throughout Lincolnshire have regularly sprung. Whether the branches maintain the same character as the stems out which they have grown, those readers who know them best, will be best able to judge, and shall be left to the free, unbiassed, exercise of their own minds.

CHAPTER II.

Societies at Newton, North Scarle, Besthorpe and Girton.

SEVERAL places in this Circuit received Methodism a considerable time before the City of Lincoln itself.

The Society at Newton was in existence before the year 1750, about which period they held their Meetings in the house of a person of the name

of Skelton, a respectable resident in the place, whom the mob treated severely for harbouring the Methodists under his roof. They broke all the windows in his house to shivers. Next they went to the stable, and, cutting the mane and the tail off the preacher's horse, proceeded to tar and cover it with feathers.—Of the spiritual state of the Newton Society at that time, I have been able to collect no particular account, save that the good lady of the house, Mrs. Skelton, while the mob were breaking their windows, remained calm in her own room, singing hymns of praise to God. This gracious woman, 'of whom the world was not worthy,' finished her life in the most happy way. When on the point of dying, though weak and feeble, she lifted her arms, and, clasping her hands in each other, exultingly exclaimed, 'I am going to be with Jesus!—glory! glory! glory!'—and so yielded up the ghost.

The Society at North Scarle is the next in point of time. Indeed the origin of this Society, as well as that of the preceding, is lost in obscurity and neglect. It existed, however, in 1759. A Society ticket of that date, now lying before me, and which belonged to William Storr, one of the early members at Scarle, is sufficient evidence of the fact. Mr. Storr was a good man, and an ornament to his religious profession, till, advanced far into life, and ripe for glory, he finished his mortal career in peace, and entered into rest. A person of the name of Arden, who had heard Mr. Wesley in Moor-fields, and gotten good, is supposed to have brought Methodism into this place.

Mr. Wesley visited this Society, and preached at Scarle, in 1759, when multitudes flocked to hear

him from the neighbouring places. But he complains, that though he spoke on the first principles of religion, and as plainly as he could, they understood as little as though he had spoken Greek.— See Wesley's Journal, vol. iii. p. 401.

The existence of a Christian Society, however small, and of the preaching of the Gospel, in the midst of a dark neighbourhood, is an interesting object. Our Lord compares it to a 'city on a hill,' which is seen from far; and, accordingly, Scarle was now visited by persons from Navenby, on the one hand, and, apparently, as far off as Newark, on the other: For it appears that Mr. Thomas Lee, when travelling in Lincolnshire a second time in 1761, was invited to visit Newark, and actually went from North Scarle, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Pool, who took in the preachers at Scarle, to preach in that town. On that occasion Mr. Lee was shamefully handled at Newark, and escaped but with his life. But, to give the circumstances of the case, comes not within the limits of my present design.

The Societies of Besthorpe and Girton may be linked together. The villages are so contiguous, that it is not likely they would be separate in those early days. Their first formation seems forgotten or lost. And all I can certainly find out respecting them at that period, is this, that they had much to endure from the ungodly and profane, and were cradled in the storm. Beyond this I can only add, that, as it is likely, the distance not being great, that the members from these places would be at Newton on the 13th of July, 1770, when Mr. Wesley visited that village, it is probable they were included in his commendation of the people then at that place: 'A people,' says he, 'more

loving, more artless, or more athirst for God, I have seldom seen.'

It is hoped that this miniature of those former Societies, will lead the present Societies, as often as they look upon it, to imitate, and if possible, to excel them, in all these lovely qualities and dispositions of mind.

CHAPTER III.

Societies at Scothorn and Nettleham.—Brief notices of Messrs W. Mawer, sen., Joseph Frith, and W. Flintham, Local Preachers.

ON the other side of Lincoln, Scothorn, and Nettleham, were visited by Methodism, before it obtained any place in the City itself.

Mary Daubney, a widow, with several children, and in humble circumstances, was the means, about the year 1779, of Scothorn being visited, by inviting the preachers to preach in her house. She had been led to hear the word, and, credible report says, at Lincoln, where Methodism is said to have made unavailing efforts about that time. She had got some good to her soul, and was anxious for more, and longed that her neighbours should be partakers of the same glorious grace; so that when the ministers of the Lord Jesus visited that village in their regular rounds, she would go from house to house, amidst buffeting and scorn, inviting them to hear the messengers of God. Nor

were her pious labours in vain in the Lord. A Society was formed in her house, which, though small and feeble, continues to this day; and the first local preacher whom God raised up within the limits of what *now* forms the Lincoln Circuit, was raised in this place. This was Mr. Thomas Watson, long since deceased, and of whom I shall make mention again in a subsequent place.

Having resided a few years in Scothorn, Mary Daubney removed to Nettleham, about three miles from Lincoln, and introduced Methodism into that village also. Afterwards she removed to Scothorn again, where she ended her days in peace, in the year 1827, and in the 95th year of her age.

For more than half a century Mary Daubney was a member of the Methodist Society in the two villages above named; and her long and steady attachment to the cause of religion, and her inviting the preachers to preach there, fully entitle her to a place in this work.

The above are the only places now in the Lincoln Circuit where Methodism had obtained and permanent footing up to the year 1780, or a little after that time: Which will appear somewhat surprising when we consider, that, at that time, it had been in the County nearly forty years. But the ablest ministers of the Gospel have not the power to command success, and convert sinners to God, where, and when they will. There were Societies, however, at Broxholme and Sturton, two villages now in the Gainsborough Circuit; and three local preachers had been raised up there, who visited the places we have been mentioning, and travelled, and laboured incessantly, to diffuse through the neighbourhood, where ever they found an open door, the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

As these men were among the first to call sinners to repentance in this neighbourhood, at a time when sin abounded, and a deep sleep sat brooding on the Country at large, their names are entitled to a respectful situation in this Narrative, and shall, therefore, be recorded in this place. Mr. William Mawer, of Broxholme, father of the late Mr. Mawer, of Lincoln, of whom I shall have to speak hereafter, was one; Mr. Joseph Frith, of the same village, was another; and Mr. William Flintham, of Sturton, was the third.

It is not pretended that these worthy and zealous individuals were men of literary talent or acquirements. But then they did not pretend to teach literature to their hearers. They pretended not to teach any thing but the Gospel. And it has never yet been proved that the Gospel may not be understood and taught independent of what is generally styled literature, as well as astronomy, anatomy, or any other art or science whatsoever, or as well as one of these arts or sciences may be known and taught without any particular acquaintance with the rest. However pleasing and agreeable an acquaintance with general literature may make a minister of Christ to some of his hearers, or however useful in many respects it may be to him, yet it is not the Gospel, nor any part of the Gospel, nor any necessary appendage of the Gospel, and should therefore have a distinct and inferior place assigned to it in the Christian's mind, suitable to what it is in itself. Neither is a man to be esteemed ignorant, as a *minister of Christ*, if he be thoroughly acquainted with those great facts and doctrines and promises, which constitute the Gospel of the Blessed God. As to teaching the Gospel to others, Bishop Burnet is of opinion, (see Pas-

toral Care), that 'A man of a good soul, may, with a moderate share of knowledge, do great service in the church, especially if he be suited with an employment that is not above his talent.' This was precisely the condition of the men of whom I am now speaking. That they were men of sound sense, good natural abilities, and sterling piety, who understood the gospel, and were able to edify their hearers by their discourses, I have no doubt, from the testimony of persons still living, who were in the habit of hearing them, and who venerate the remembrance of their names. I shall make no apology for inserting the following lines, taken from a larger piece composed by one of them, (Mr. Mawer,) and preserved among the papers of one of his friends. If they possess not that loftiness of style, and the elegance, which usually adorn the nobler productions of poetry, they have the richer merit of discovering a mind in communion with the Deity, and longing to see him in his temple above.

— * * * * *

'Come into my heart, And never depart,
 Ah, leave me no more!
 Thou know'st that I love thee; Thy name I adore!
 I hope to remove To the mansions above,
 On thy beauty to gaze,
 And fall prostrate before thee In wonder and praise.
 How amaz'd shall I be When my Jesus I see
 In glory appear!
 What a wonder of wonders If I should be there!'

HISTORY OF METHODISM, &c.

PART THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

Mr. Wesley preaches at Lincoln.—Country places noticed.—Methodist preaching established at Lincoln.—Reflections.

THE first time that Mr. Wesley preached in Lincoln was on the 30th of June, 1780, after he had been fifty years without ever setting his foot in the place, as he informs us himself.

He came over to Lincoln from Newark, at the request of some gentleman of the former place, whose name I do not know. The City Cryer having been employed to announce his intention of preaching on the Castle Hill, a large crowd assembled at six in the evening, to whom, under the canopy of heaven, he preached the word of life. The day after, at ten in the morning, they were as quiet as on the preceding evening, while, on the same spot of ground, he addressed them again. On this occasion the following circumstance took place, which, though of no great importance in itself, may properly be related, as tending to illustrate the character and perseverance of the servant of God.

About the middle of his sermon, a violent storm came on ; when Mr. Wood, the keeper, opening the door of the court-house, admitted the preacher and the whole congregation in ; and Mr. Wesley, taking his stand where the magistrates usually sat to administer justice, proceeded in preaching the gospel of God.

What effect these discourses produced, is uncertain. They would doubtless be a subject of conversation in the City ; but they led to no immediate establishment of preaching in it, no one inclining to patronise the cause.

The year after Mr. Wesley visited Lincoln again, and preached on the Castle Hill, as before ; and, on some other occasions, he visited this City, and was treated, by the populous at large, with decorum and respect. But though his congregations were large and attentive, no Society was formed ; nor did any permanent good appear to be done.

While Methodism was making these fruitless attempts in the City, the Country places were gradually improving. Meetings for prayer, and occasionally preaching, had been held in Spalford for four or five years, in the house of Thomas Torr. And at Ingham Mill, about the Spring of 1780, preaching, both by the local and travelling preachers, was numerously attended, and productive of God. Lancelot Harrison was then travelling on the Circuit. Also the local preachers preached at Fillingham ; but Sir Cicil Wray, who resided at Fillingham Castle, would not suffer the travelling preachers to preach at Fillingham ; which is the more singular, as he did not interfere with them at Ingham Mill, though he had the same authority there as at Fillingham itself.

Since Mr. Wesley first preached at Lincoln, about seven years had now elapsed, and yet there was not a single Methodist in the place. It has been said, that in the natural world the thickest darkness is observed immediately to precede the dawn of day. Whether this be uniformly the case in the moral world, I will not pretend to say. But that there was gross darkness in Lincoln, at that period, is beyond a doubt. Bull-baiting was one of the annual amusements of the populous; and the more respectable inhabitants of the City, either encouraged these brutal pastimes, or saw them with supineness and neglect. But an event was now upon the eve of taking place, which is exerting a moral influence upon a considerable portion of the inhabitants of Lincoln to the present day, I mean the establishment of the Wesleyan ministry in this City; the principal circumstances of which I shall proceed to relate.

Sarah Parrot, a poor woman, residing at Bracebridge, two miles from Lincoln, being a member of our Society, was in the habit of going to Sturton, six or seven miles from Bracebridge, to meet in class. Besides the weekly fatigue of this journey, she suffered other hardships for the sake of her religion. Nevertheless, her attachment to Methodism was such, that the only effect which these sufferings produced, was that of leading her often to pray, that Methodism might be established in the City of Lincoln, and that sinners might there be converted to God. One day, when in company with her friends at Sturton, she was lamenting, as usual, the state of the City, as to morals and religion, and expressing the wishes of her heart; when one of the party observed as follows: 'There is a pious Lady at Gunnerby, who has done much for Metho-

dism at that place ; if she would come and reside at Lincoln, and take in the preachers, so that there could be regular preaching there, it is probable, notwithstanding the failure of former attempts, that some good might be done.'

The mind of Sarah Parrot was honest and simple ; free from disguise, and ready to undertake any thing promising, in the most distant manner, to bring Methodism to this place ; and, under the influence of this christian feeling, she took it into her head to visit Gunnerby on foot, (having no other means of conveyance,) and actually went thither in this way, (a distance of twenty seven miles,) to invite Mrs. Fisher, (for that was the Lady's name,) to come and reside at Lincoln for the purpose alluded to above.

These two persons had not the least personal acquaintance with each other at that time. But when Sarah Parrot had found out Mrs. Fisher, the former was treated by the latter with kindness ; but it was not likely she should instantly make up her mind to comply with the request. Sarah Parrot came home disappointed. But, on telling the circumstances of her journey to her friends at Sturton, and to the preacher who came there at that time, it is said that he wrote to Mrs. Fisher on the subject ; after which the case of her coming to Lincoln was decided in the following way. She was with a few christian friends in her own house, who had met together for social prayer, when opening her Hymn Book on these words, ' God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform,' they were applied to her mind with peculiar and unusual energy, and with such apparent reference to the object of Sarah Parrot's visit, that, taken in connexion with all the circumstances of the case, she

concluded it to be a call from God. She, therefore, hired a chaise, without hesitation, and came over at once to Lincoln, for the express purpose of hiring a house, and of making such other arrangements as might be needful to accomplish the object she now had in view. She soon found Sarah Parrot, but had more difficulty in procuring a suitable house. But, having done this, she returned to Gunnerby, settled her affairs, and, coming immediately to Lincoln, invited the travelling preachers to take Lincoln regularly in their round.

As the reader will perceive that Mrs. Fisher was considerably influenced in this affair by an impression made upon her mind, we may drop a word on that matter as we proceed.

That some inward impressions are from Satan, and ought to be despised and rejected, is as true as that others are from God, and ought to be respected and pursued: But no inward impression, which would lead us to do any thing at variance with the written word of God, is from God. This is a principle and rule of judgment with respect to impressions which should be deeply impressed on the mind. We shall then be prepared to admit that particular cases may, and, in fact, do frequently come before us while passing through life, respecting which some inward impression is the only thing which can assure us that it is our own duty to act, and to do this or that. The thing in question at the time, is a thing which may be done, because it is right in itself; and it is a thing which ought to be done by some one, because it is necessary: So that the only question with me is, whether it be my duty to do it, and the word of God, which does not make mention of my name, nor of that particular circum-

stance or thing, does not tell me that it is ; nor are the circumstances of the case such as to deliver my mind from every degree of difficulty and suspense. Who, then, or what, shall satisfy me that it is *my* duty, but God himself, by an impression on the mind to that effect ? It is thus that certain individuals are assured of their call to the ministry of the Gospel, being ‘inwardly moved,’ that is, *inwardly impressed*, ‘by the Holy Ghost,’ that it is *their* duty ‘to take upon them’ that great and important work. And thousands, as well as was Mrs. Fisher, in matters of inferior moment, perhaps, to that of preaching the Gospel, are impressed with a sense of their own personal obligation to attend to particular duties in a similar way ; to which, of course, they should punctually attend.

Mrs. Fisher’s coming to Lincoln, and inviting the preachers to make it one of their regular places of preaching, was about the close of the year 1787, as appears from a letter in Mr. Wesley’s own hand writing, now lying before me. This Letter, which is dated the 18th of January, 1788, was written to Mr. Lancelot Harrison, a preacher of Mr. Wesley, then on the Circuit. It has been kindly furnished by Mrs. Belton, of Walkeringham, daughter of Mr. Harrison, and contains the following words : ‘I am glad sister Fisher is settled at Lincoln, and that you have begun preaching there again. Hitherto it has been

A soil ungrateful to the tiller’s toils ;

But possibly it may now bear fruit.’—

CHAPTER II.

The first preaching place in Lincoln, Society formed, and New Chapel built.—Mr. Wesley's last visit to Lincoln.—His characteristic remarks on the people, &c.

THE first place of worship regularly occupied by the Methodists at Lincoln, was of a very humble description; the only place they could procure being a kind of old lumber-room, near Gowt's bridge, which they put into as decent repair as they could.

But this circumstance, I mean the humbleness of their place of worship, might contribute, at that porticular juncture, to Methodism taking root. There was no want of a disposition in the people to persecute religion. The preachers of Mr. Wesley had formerly proved this, though they had always treated Mr. Wesley himself with decorum and respect. Had Methodism, therefore, put on an appearance at once in this City, and excited more attention, by a more public situation, or more respectable place of worship, prejudice might have reised a tempest, and banished her entirely from the place. But we may adopt the language of the observant Psalmist, and say, *Thou didst hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man : Thou didst keep them in the secret of thy presence from the strife of tongues.*

A small Socety was formed in this humble sanctnary, consisting of four females. These were Mrs. Fisher, Sarah Parrot, Hannah Calder, and Elizabeth Keyley, one of whom continues to this

day. Their place of worship was well attended, usually full; and the little flock rejoiced in the Lord, and prayed with all their heart. Nor was the ministry of the word in vain in the Lord. The Society gradually increased; and among them was introduced that mode of rule and discipline which governs the Wesleyan Methodists throughout the Land.

On the 4th of August, 1788, Mr. Wesley visited Lincoln again, and, doubtless, was highly pleased to find a Society in the place. He preached about 12 o'clock, in Mrs. Fisher's yard, to a large Assembly of rich and poor; and 'the power of the Lord was present to heal.'—See Mr. Wesley's Journal, vol. 6. p. 165.

Lincoln was now on the eve of brighter days, and some good was about to be done; for very shortly after, the Congregation, and the general aspect of things, were such, that they began to have thoughts about building a Chapel; and Mr. Harrison, it appears, wrote to Mr. Wesley about money for the accomplishment of this work. Mr. Wesley's reply, in his own hand writing, furnished also by Mrs. Belton, is now before me. It was written from Dublin, April 11th, 1789; and, as it will throw light upon the state of Methodism at that period at Lincoln, I will insert it in this place. It is as follows:—

‘ My dear Brother,

‘ A Letter, which I received two or three days ago from George Whitfield, informs me, that I outran my income so far last year, as to be now above two hundred pounds in debt. I have therefore promised him not to draw upon him any more, before the end of next month.

‘But do you not remember the rule in the minutes of Conference, That we are not to begin the building of any Preaching House, before two thirds of the money is subscribed? This rule we may not dispense with. And, I am afraid, this is not the case with regard to the House you are speaking of at Lincoln. I doubt, therefore, whether the time be come for your building there. But you have cause to rejoice that the work of God prospers there, as well as at poor Blighton. I am, &c.,
John Wesley.’

It does not appear, however, that Mr. Wesley’s inability to advance them money, or his supposing the time was not come, prevented their proceeding; so that they had the pleasure of seeing the Chapel opened in the Spring of the following year—about two years from the time that Mrs. Fisher came to reside at the place. This Chapel, which was neat and commodious, and situated on the south side of the river, between the highbridge and the swingbridge, would hold five or six hundred persons; and, considering the newness of the cause of Methodism at Lincoln, the smallness of the Society, and the circumstances of the members, it was a noble effort of faith, and of piety and love to God.

On July the 1st, of the same year, (1790,) Mr. Wesley visited Lincoln for the last time. He preached in the new Chapel in the evening, to a crowded audience, from ‘One thing is needful.’ ‘When the congregation were retiring from the Chapel, a lady exclaimed, in a tone of great surprise,—*Is this the great Mr. WESLEY, of whom we hear so much in the present day? Why, the poorest person in the Chapel might understand him!*’ The gentleman to whom the remark was

made, replied,—‘In this, Madam, he displays his greatness; that while the poorest can understand him, the most learned are edified, and cannot be offended.’ May I ever study to preach in the same plain and unaffected style.

During this visit to Lincoln, Mr. Wesley, in company with several of his friends, spent some time in visiting the Minster, which he complimented as being, in his judgment, more elegant than that at York; not only in its admirable situation, but also in various parts of its structure. He also paid particular attention to the manners and disposition of the Lincoln people; and thought, they had less fire and vigour of spirit than the York people, but more mildness and gentleness of disposition; by means of which, had they possessed the same outward advantages, he thought they would probably have excelled their neighbours.—How far Mr. Wesley was correct, those who are familiar with Methodism at Lincoln and York, will be best able to say.

When leaving Lincoln, July the 2nd, the post-boy stopped at Drinsey Nook, where a little incident occurred, which I cannot forbear to relate.

As soon as Mr. Wesley went into the Inn, the innkeeper and his wife burst into tears, wringing their hands, and weeping bitterly. ‘What! are *you* come into my house!’ said the man: ‘My father was John Laister, of Epworth.’—Mr. Wesley soon found he was the son of an old Methodist, remarkable for piety; and as both he and his wife had been Methodists, and were now in a backsliding state, this call of Mr. Wesley, which was equally unexpected both by him and them, had

recalled to their minds former things, which they could not remember *without tears*!—Mr. Wesley prayed with them, giving them suitable advice, and so went on his way to Newton, where he preached out of doors, as the house would not contain one half of the congregation.—Journal, vol. vi. p. 239.

CHAPTER III.

The Lincoln Society persecuted. — Navenby. — Boothby, and John Mayfield. — Harby. — Labours of Messrs. Hannah and Jos. Mawer. — State of the Lincoln Society in 1796.

ABOUT the time when the Chapel was built at Lincoln, Methodism was much persecuted in various parts of the County, under pretences entirely new. In one place, when a few were assembled to pray in a private house, it was thought such an offence by two neighbouring magistrates, that they fined the man of the house in the penalty of twenty pounds, and distrained and sold his household goods to pay the fine. He applied to the Quarter-sessions for redress: But the magistrates averred, that ‘The Methodists could have no relief from the Act of Toleration, *because they went to church*; and that, so long as they did so, the Conventicle Act should be put in execution upon them.’—In another instance, when one of the preachers was commencing his discourse to a quiet congregation, a neighbour-

ing magistrate sent a constable to seize him, though he was licensed, and would not release him till he had paid twenty pounds ; telling him his licence was good for nothing, because he was a churchman.'—*Journal*, vol. vi. p. 286.

It is true, they did not go into all these lengths of hostility at Lincoln. The rabble were the principal visible agents, who had recourse to their usual weapons, which, on most occasions, they employed in a spirited manner ; but they were encouraged by others no better than themselves, who scorned a visible alliance with the crowd.

But while the cause in this City was rocked in the cradle of opposition, the members were at unity with each other, and God was preparing them for usefulness to men. Providence brought among them two persons, whose piety and talents were a means of great good. The former of these was a Mr. John Hannah, a respectable young man, who came to reside at Lincoln in May, 1790, and was not long afterwards truly converted, and joined to the Society and cause of God. The latter was Mr. Joseph Mawer, a local preacher, who left Broxholme to reside at Lincoln, much about the same time. But here I must suspend the narrative of Lincoln for a little season, and mark, in some of the neighbouring villages, the diffusion and increase of sacred light.

About the time when Mrs. Fisher was settling at Lincoln, Methodism was preparing to besiege Navenby also, a town about nine miles from Lincoln ; and, it appears an observable coincidence, that at Navenby also, a female was employed by Jehovah in the introduction of his truth among a people who were strangers and enemies to God.

Mrs. Watkinson was the name of the person of whom I now speak. Early in life she began to seek God, and joined the Methodist Society in the vicinity of Louth. In the order of an inscrutable Providence she was removed to Navenby, and had, in 1786, when the Baptists attempted to preach there, maintained for some time an unblemished character in that place, though destitute of the public means of grace. Mrs. Watkinson attended their ministry, and got good; and, to evince her gratitude to God and to this people, she permitted them no longer to preach in the street, but received them into her house, which thus became the temple of the true and living God. Her neighbours, however, enraged at this pious conduct, raised such a storm of persecution, that the Baptists were deterred from visiting the place. In 1787, the preachers of Lady Huntingdon made a similar attempt at Navenby, and were driven out in the same way; but they left not the place till the mob had mal-treated the person of Mrs. Watkinson, and done much damage to her dwelling. Against this pious female the hatred of the mob was very severe. On one occasion, they threw a large stone at her through the window, while carrying a young child in her arms to bed; which, had it been one hair's breath nearer, its magnitude and velocity were such, that the child might have perished in her arms. In such perilous circumstances, how visibly is displayed the guardian care of an ever watchful Providence, under the subordinate administration of those angel-bands, who camp round them that fear Jehovah, *to keep them in all their ways*, and neither suffer them nor their little ones *to dash their feet against a stone!*—(Psa. xci. 11.)

For about five years afterwards both Mrs. Watkinson and those few at Navenby who began to have some little concern for religion were without Gospel ordinances, or wandered to distant places to hear the word of life: But during this season, as well as before, the populous of Navenby had a burning and shining light in the example and conversation of this gracious woman, which was not suffered to glow in vain. Among others who saw it, and profited by it, was Mr. Hazard, of Navenby, a gentleman of independent fortune, who began at length occasionally to converse with her on matters of religion, till, ultimately, he had such views of his own sinful condition, as led him to seek salvation in Jesus Christ.

Mr. Hazard then invited the Wesleyan preachers, who at that time came to Lincoln, to visit Navenby; which, accordingly, they did, and met with a rough reception from the populous at large. Mud, rubbish, rotten eggs, and the like, were used by these manipuli of Apollyon's army, so as sometimes to conceal the colour of the clothes which the hated Methodists had on. These things, however, were but the prelude of more serious work; for they damaged the building of Mr. Hazard, and made great depredations on his property in other respects; and the rich farmers encouraged these guilty practices, and gave the agents abundance of strong drink, to prepare them to accomplish effectually their profligate and wicked designs. So true it is that in every place the carnal mind is enmity against God, and sets itself in array against every thing good. But they were not permitted to accomplish the object of their will.

The village of Boothby comes next under our view. And here I shall have to take notice of John Mayfield, a poor, but pious man, whom I shall occasionally call *The Shepherd of Boothby* when I mention him in this work.

The first Methodist sermon which John Mayfield heard, was at the opening of the Chapel in the City of Lincoln. His deportment had been regular and steady all his days; but his views of the plan of salvation were not correct. The doctrine, however, which he heard on that occasion, was a blessing to his mind, and from that day he determined to identify himself with the Wesleyan cause. John Mayfield now made great use of the Scriptures, searching more fully into the doctrine of the Cross. His object in this labour was to find out the way to God more perfectly, whose favour he panted to enjoy. Nor did he search the Scriptures in vain. As he read and reflected, on one occasion, light came into his soul, accompanied by a bright and glowing confidence, that God was become his salvation, and that his soul was fully reconciled to God; so that before he had done the chapter which he was then reading, (the 2nd of Luke,) his soul was quite overwhelmed with a sense of the Divine Love, which constrained him, in loud and rapturous strains, to celebrate the praises of the Triune God. This happy frame of mind was not a momentary or transient thing. And while it continued, his happy soul, as he mused on the goodness of his reconciled God, and watched his flocks, would often burst out in songs of holy rapture, and the pastures were made vocal by his praise. Such was the happy experience of the *Shepherd of Boothby*, when he was first adopted into the family of God.

Afterwards, however, though not very suddenly, these raptures, as is usual with Christians in such cases, settled into a calmer state of peace and holy joy.

John Mayfield, having found honey in the rock, could not be content to enjoy his morsel alone, but desired his neighbours to be partakers of the grace; and, to carry these wishes into effect, he certified the proper persons that his own dwelling would thenceforth be used as a place of religious worship, and so, putting the persons who might worship there under the protection of the law, established therein the regular means of grace. But the inhabitants of Boothby were not inferior to their neighbours at Navenby in hostility to the *preaching of the cross of Christ*. All the arts which malice could invent, or their power put into execution, they ardently practiced to prevent it in that village; so that John Mayfield had his attachment to the Redeemer severely put to the test. But notwithstanding the rage of the wicked, some good was done—a few began to feel they were sinners, and manifested a desire to flee from the wrath to come; and these, of course, became the companions of the pious Shepherd, who rejoiced over them in the Lord, as over brethren reclaimed from hell and death. Having been greatly disturbed by the mob in the commencement of their meetings, Mayfield and his little company, when Christmas drew near, agreed to meet at four o'clock in the morning of Christmas day, in order to celebrate the birth of the Saviour without any molestation, supposing the rabble would not trouble them at so early an hour. But they happened to be wide in these calculations. When the moment arrived, the mob were collected, and ready for action; and while John Mayfield and

his friends were spending the hour in prayer and praise within, his enemies were demolishing his property without, levelling his garden wall with the ground, and doing other damage, to a considerable amount; for which conduct, the ring-leaders of the mob were bound over to appear at the quarter sessions to answer for their deeds.

When the time arrived for Mr. Mayfield to lay before the Grand Jury his sufferings, he gave them a narrative thereof, and then added, 'Sirs, I wish not the offenders to feel the severity of the law; I wish nothing but peace, and the undisturbed enjoyment of my religious privileges, which, if I may be allowed to possess, all I desire will be obtained.' Such was the mild and magnanimous spirit of the Shepherd of Boothby, the simplicity and ingenuousness of which appeared to please the Grand Jury, who gave Mr. Mayfield to understand that they thought he might obtain the acknowledgement of his right, and the sum of all his wishes from his persecutors, without bringing them into open court. And in the presence of John Mayfield, both the rioters and the Jury promised he should have his request. John fully believed them, and all the parties seemed satisfied. Mr. Mayfield set off towards home, enraptured with the hope of worshipping God in peace, for the time to come; the rioters followed, triumphing with ribbands in their hats, and the village bells were ringing when they entered Boothby, to welcome their arrival. Such proceedings, on the part of the rioters, is presumptive evidence, that those gentlemen of the Grand Jury did any thing but their duty in that particular case.—The rioters, by the lenient treatment they had met, were encouraged, or seemed to think they were encouraged, to proceed to greater lengths against the

meek and lowly Shepherd. They, therefore, broke his windows during the time of preaching; they cut his well-rope, and sank his bucket in the water; they mounted the roof of his house, and poured down the chimney filth too nasty to be named; they did many other things which none but the basest minds could think of, or the basest hands perform. Several of the rich farmers were the secret instigators of these *decent* and *orderly* proceedings, granting abundance of ale and money to the *most respectable* persons in the village, to induce them to be active and persevering in these works of *their charity*, in which their souls found sweet delight.

At that period it might be said, *Boothby against John Mayfield and John Mayfield against Boothby*. John was almost single and alone, and numbers and wealth were with his enemies: Their banners were on the hills; but he was in the vale below, a poor Shepherd, abiding with the lambs of his flock, and had nothing whereon to subsist but the scanty wages of his daily labours and nightly cares. But piety gives constancy and courage to man, when beset with difficulties and dangers on every hand; and John Mayfield had received much piety from God. His, indeed, was a noble mind. Fortitude, faith, patience, courage, kindness of disposition towards his enemies, prayer, and love never to be conquered or wearied in labouring to do good to all men, were some of the graces which characterised the daily walk of this humble individual, and by which he ultimately vanquished all his foes. He never counted persecution an injury done to himself, but to Christ: He, therefore, felt no resentment in his breast, and could, of course, very readily forgive, and as readily do any kind and obliging action for the worst of his foes: This

by degrees, and almost imperceptibly, won the affections of those with whom he conversed, and who had previously been among the foremost of his persecutors; so that some of them began to abandon the wicked confederacy, and were not afraid to declare, in the presence of their old companions, that *a man so truly good, so honest and upright, as was John Mayfield, merited illtreatment from no man on earth.* How amazing the force of genuine worth and solid piety, even in the humblest cottager on earth! The piety of John Mayfield, which at first occasioned many of his neighbours to hate him, was the thing which ultimately procured him their love, till, at length, [the nefarious bond which had united the wicked against him was entirely broken up, and all opposition melted away.

The following incident, as it contributed to allay the violence of open persecution, and shews us how the Almighty can baffle the hopes of the wicked, and deliver the righteous from their malignant and crafty designs, deserves to be related in this place. The village of Boothby is, chiefly, the property of one nobleman, whose steward regularly attends, every half year, to receive the rents. The first time he came, after Methodism had entered the village, was the day on which their was to be preaching, according to the usual plan, in John Mayfield's house. When this co-incidence was discovered, the rich farmers laid hold of it with eagerness, assuring themselves that it would enable them fully, and in a summary way, to root up the religion of Mayfield, and banish Methodism entirely from the place; for they made themselves sure that the steward, the very moment they told him that a tenant had converted his Lordship's premises into a conventicle, would peremptorally eject him, and thus

their labours would be crowned with success. The day at last arrived, and the farmers were assembled. John Mayfield had gone on his way, *as he did aforetime*; he had not altered the night of preaching to some other night in the week, lest it should offend the steward, and cause him to be ejected from the place. All things were just as they would have been, had it been some other day. The farmers were glad of all this, and at length the moment arrived when by means of their spokesman they were to lay this affair before the man who was to gratify their wishes, and avenge their quarrel with Methodism and the humble Shepherd. But to their utter astonishment, the steward heard their story as though he heard them not! The business of the day proceeded as usual; and when all was over, the steward, as if to confound these men, and honour the *Shepherd* in their presence, proposed to a young gentleman who had come with him on that occasion, to go down to John Mayfield's house, and spend an hour in listening to the word of God. The proposal was readily acceded to on the part of the young gentleman, and when the hour arrived they accordingly walked down. This unexpected circumstance led many to attend that night, merely to see how this affair would end; and not a few were utterly amazed, after the sermon, when they saw the steward cross the room to shake hands with the preacher, which he did in the most kind and affable manner, thanking him cordially for the discourse, and paying to John Mayfield, at the same time, very condescending tokens of friendship and respect.

Here, then, we may leave John Mayfield, for the present, in the enjoyment of the felicity which this eventful day procured for him. Thence forward

he was viewed by his superiors in a very different light from that in which they had been led to look upon him. Example is always influential. A gentleman had been seen to respect Methodism and Mr. Mayfield, and from that very hour did both Methodism and Mr. Mayfield begin to be looked upon without prejudice, and became as respected by the wealthier inhabitants of the village of Boothby as they had been held by them in derision before : For their real excellency began to be discovered, which could not be seen, without exciting approval, veneration and love.

The next place which, in the order of time, appears to come under our notice, is the village of Harby, which was visited in 1792. The populous in this place had recourse to a somewhat unusual method of hindering Methodism from entering the place. They flocked to the church in crowds, saying, ' We must attend better than we have done, or the Methodists will surely gain ground ! '—a circumstance which they deprecated as a judgment from God. One individual, however, adopted another course. He announced his intention of publicly confuting their doctrines the next [time they came ; and, with that intent, actually appeared with his Bible under his arm, in the midst of the assembly ; but he stood mute till the service was brought to a close, and was afterwards laughed at by the boys, for his folly and pains.

Mr. Hannah, of Lincoln, whom we mentioned before, became a local preacher about this period, making his first attempt at preaching on the 25th of December, 1793 ; so that there were now two local preachers, Mr. Hannah and Mr. Joseph Mawer, in the City of Lincoln. These

two servants of Christ, and one or two more, residing in other places, pitying the ungodly and profane, visited the neighbouring towns and villages, preaching in the streets and on the greens, when no other places could be obtained, and laboured to point all who would hear them to the Lamb of God. Mr. Mawer, who is now living at Barnsley, in Yorkshire, has favoured me with a letter on the subject, making mention of Boothby, Navenby, and Welbourn, as places which they visited in this way. Nor did Mr. Mawer, any more than Mr. Hannah, escape persecution while engaged in these labours of love, as the following case will sufficiently shew. One sabbath morning, after preaching in a small house at Welbourn, he found both himself and his friends surrounded by a mob, armed with shovels, and the like, filled with dirt and filth, which they bestowed so plentifully upon them, that Mr. Mawer was glad to borrow a coat of his friend Mr. Hazard, of Navenby; and some of his companions were put into a worse condition than himself. In the meanwhile, Mr. Hannah abounded in labours in the cause of his God, which he was now extremely anxious to promote. Among other places he visited Welton; and as he feared the mob would molest him while preaching, he took his stand under a window of the church, that the fear of breaking it might deter them from throwing stones; and this precaution had the desired effect. But when he had done, and was going away, they seemed to recollect that they were much in arrears, and followed him briskly with brickbats and stones.—Mr. Hannah adopted the same plan at Harmston as at Welton. But it would swell this narrative to go into each particular case; yet the following I must beg permission to relate.

On the 22nd of April, 1796, he visited Welbourn. Returning from thence, he attempted to preach in the street at Wellingore; but before he had finished his prayer, the mob compelled him to desist. The spirit of these men, near a hundred in number, was astonishing. For the space of nearly a mile, they literally drove Mr. Hannah and his companions before them with the utmost fury, uttering the most dreadful imprecations every step of the way. They would not even suffer them to speak, and threatened to knock them down, if they did not go. In this terrible encounter, the mob threw many stones at Mr. Hannah and his companions, but, through the Providence of God, they received no harm. Though on many occasions for some years Mr. Hannah had suffered in this way, he had met with nothing before which equalled this.

In the mean while, at Lincoln, it is pleasing to observe, considerable good continued to be done. The Society had been formed about eight years; and their Chapel built a little more than six. They were now (1796) become pretty regularly organized, having class-meetings, band-meetings, love-feasts, and watch-nights, which were owned to God; and the means of grace, in general, were seasons of special good.

They had class-leaders and local-preachers; who, under the regular preachers, watched over the people in the name of the Lord; and there was a brightening prospect for days to come.—‘At the close of this year,’ says Mr. Hannah in his Diary, ‘we had a very solemn time, while, with one accord, in the Chapel, we were praying the old year out and the new year in, and mutually renewing our covenant with God.’

CHAPTER IV.

Besthorpe and Girton.—North Scarle.—Thorpe.—Spalford.—South Clifton, &c.—Death and character of Mr. Hannah.—Prosperity at Lincoln.—General view of the progress which Methodism had made in these parts in the year 1801.

AMONG the Country places to be noticed in this chapter, we may give Besthorpe and Girton the precedence, in the order of time.

The Society at these places (for they were then one) had been doing well for some time, and was become so strong as to build a Chapel in 1794. This was the third Chapel in what is now the Lincoln Circuit, none, save Newton and Lincoln, having been built before it.

From this period to the year 1799, a variety of events at Besthorpe took place. Thsy had experienced prosperity in the midst of persecutions; for some of the members had been burnt in effigy for righteousness sake. But the enemy of souls had recourse to other means of injuring and destroying the work of God. One of the leading members swallowed those scorpion eggs, the doctrines of unconditional reprobation and election. He was a local preacher; and, brooding on his favourite notions, he brought forth at last such a progeny of unprofitable disputations among the people, whom he spared no pains to turn aside, that at length he ef-

fecting an unpleasant division of the Society, and drew away a number unto himself. If such principles as this unfortunate individual embraced did but lead their votaries to attempt the conversion of drunkards, sabbath breakers, and the like, they would perhaps do no harm. These principles, however, have little tendency to produce works of this kind. Whatever their votaries may occasionally pretend, they are secretly too wise to waste time in labours and toils which consistency assures them can answer no purpose. They perpetually whisper in the ears of each other, that the *accursed reprobates can never be saved* and that the *bles-
sed elect can never be lost*; so that to disturb the one or the other can answer no good or valuable end. Yet so it is, that these principles, as if envious of those who are beginning to seek God, do eternally lead their votaries to hunt their precious life, often giving them no rest or quiet, till they have allured and lulled them to slumber on the deceitful pillow of anti-scriptural decrees.

Attempts, of this mean sort, have been so often practiced with success upon the young and unwary members of some of our Societies, that it becomes a serious duty to put them on their guard.

But, when the effects of this division at Beshorpe had a little subsided, a pleasing revival of religion took place. A considerable number was added the Lord—a circumstance most cheering to those who had stood firm in the storm.

As for North Scarle, though one of the first places, in point of time, it was not the first now in some other respects. In 1798, their condition was such, that Mr. D—, the superintendent of the Circuit, when making some memoranda for Mr.

C.—, who was about to succeed him, is said to have written this laconic sentence as expressive of his judgment of their state—*Scarle not worth keeping*. Had this sarcasm been merited by the Society at large, it would have been better omitted, as it was certain to irretate, and call forth reprisals from some in the place, which could scarcely fail to produce an unpleasant effect. Little things do sometimes sow the seeds of incalculable and almost interminable mischief in the churches of God, and are most likely to do so if the stream of piety be shallow, and its current slow. North Scarle was not destitute of piety at that period. There was a seed of good in the place, though it was not so diffusive and flourishing as was desirable, considering there had been preaching for, at least, forty years at that place. But individuals, when standing at the head of Societies, especially small ones, and in country places, are sometimes the sole hindrance to the further prosperity of the work; but whether this was then the case at North Scarle, I know not.

The piety and zeal of Mr. Hannah had led him to preach at Thorpe on the Hill; and, on the 19th of March, 1797, he formed a Society of twelve members at that place. At the same time, there was occasional preaching at Aubourn; but it was not continued: The proper commencement of Methodism at Aubourn, is of a later date.

A Society was formed at Spalford, and south Clifton was visited by the Methodist preachers, in the year 1799. About the same time also, Scarle lost one of its leading members in the death of Mr. Poole, and not longer after it began to lift up its head. So that there appears, about this time, to have been awakenings in the villages in that neigh-

bourhood, and a reviving descent of the dews of grace.

I have found nothing remarkable, at this period, in the Societies at Ingham, Scothorn, and Nettleham, nor in that at Newton; but, it is presumed, they were steady, and, upon the whole, doing well. The establishment at this period of a Benevolent Society among the Methodists in Lincoln, speaks much in favour of Lincoln at that time. But I must hasten to notice the severe loss which Lincoln, and, indeed, the whole neighbourhood, sustained by the death of Mr. Hannah, which occurred on the 26th of September, in the year 1800. And it will be proper to suspend the narrative, to pay some token of respect to the memory of so excellent and useful a man.

Mr. Hannah was born in the village of Glentworth, about twelve miles north of Lincoln, in the year 1770, and came to reside at Lincoln in the year 1790, being then twenty years of age. He was under serious impressions at the time, and seeking the things which concerned his peace. But at that time he was no Methodist, nor had he any acquaintance with them; and being wishful to alter his mode of life and live to God, he rather he shunned society in general than tried to form any connexions, and spent much time in the perusal of religious books. By this means he acquired a considerable degree of general knowledge on religious subjects, which was afterwards of service to him and to the cause of God. But, unhapily, Mr. Hannah did not retain his religious impressions in their original vigour and force. He needed help; for he found it difficult to stand alone in the ways of God, which, indeed, is, perhaps, quite impossible, when we may

have the aid of christian fellowship and communion, and refuse to avail ourselves of the privilege, as Mr. Hannah now did. But although the blandishments of vice and evil company had turned him aside, the Spirit of God followed him with kind reproofs, and he was again renewed to repentance and a concern for the salvation of his soul. He now, after struggling with some difficulties in his mind respecting it, went to the Methodist Chapel; and the sermon which he then heard was made a blessing to his soul. He joined the Society shortly after; and, having found peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost, began to feel an unusual desire that sinners might be saved, and that he might do something for that God who had done so much for him, which led him to begin to preach the Gospel to his fellow men. All this took place in about three years and six months from the time of his first coming to Lincoln; for his first attempt to preach was on the 25th of December, 1793, as was stated in a former part of this work.

Mr. Hannah laboured nearly seven years as a local preacher, visiting almost every place within ten or fifteen miles of this City, and preaching to the people, in the streets, or on the greens of the villages, when no other place could be procured, the unsearchable riches of the grace of Christ. His zeal in this great work was uncommon, as his views of the worth of immortal souls were vast, and his love and pity towards them, most ardent and strong. Nor did the Almighty suffer this his devoted servant to labour in his vineyard in vain, but gave him seals to his ministry and souls for his hire. His, indeed, was a soul that could not be satisfied without visible proofs that his ministry produced instances of direct conversion to God; so that in the Spring of

1795, when he had preached somewhat more than a year, he became very uneasy, and began to think he was not called of God to preach, because, though his preaching was acceptable and useful to the Societies, he had not seen, among the ungodly part of his hearers, any considerable awakenings or turning to God. He, therefore, came to the following resolution upon this momentous point: *If the Lord, said he, does not bless the word, and awaken and convert sinners by my ministry, I will conclude I am not called to preach, and entirely give it up.* However right or wrong such a resolution as this may be in some other respects, it displays a character of mind, and an ardency of soul for the conversion of perishing sinners, which commend the man to our judgment and conscience, and were doubtless pleasing to the wise and holy God; and, accordingly, God did, on the 2nd of July of the same year, indulge his wishes in this respect. He was preaching that day at Kirton. After the sermon was concluded, they continued some time, in fervent prayer to God. While thus employed, the POWER of the Lord came down on the Assembly, and some souls, being convinced, began to be in deep distress. These *slain of the Lord* broke out in agonies of prayer for the pardon of their sins, and while they and others for them were wrestling with God in earnest supplication, *four* of them laid hold of the Redeemer's garment by faith, and obtained pardon and peace with God. It was a season the like to which Mr. Hannah had never before witnessed; and as he had no doubt of it being the work of God, it silenced his doubts respecting his call to preach, and led him to go on his way with joy. We may just further observe upon the case now before us, that it shews the utility of having, at least occasionally, protracted prayer after

the preaching of the word ; for want of which perhaps, in many cases, much less good is done than otherwise would be accomplished, and souls for whom the Saviour suffered are left to perish in their sin and blood.

Mr. Hannah was a man of respectable connexions, and bore a most excellent character, even among men of the world, with whom (being in the law, as clerk in a respectable office in the City) he had frequently to do. But his chief praise was his genuine and deep piety, and ardent love for the souls of men, over whom he wept and prayed, and to whom he preached Christ, as long as his strength would permit. The last sermon he preached, was in the Lincoln old Chapel, from the parable of the ten virgins. A consumption had, for some time, been sapping the foundation of his valuable life, and greatly impairing his constitution ; and that might be one cause of his rupturing a blood vessel while delivering his last discourse, and of accelerating his lamented end. Mr. Hannah is now with God, enjoying the blooming reward of his former labour and toil.

As Mr. Hannah had been married about seven years and three or four months when he was called away, he had a wife and children to leave behind him in the world ; and as his affection for them was strong, he felt it no easy task fully to give them up. But the Lord heard prayer ; so that after a few day's struggle, he was fully enabled to resign them up to the Lord, and felt he had nothing to do but to die. Thus waiting the welcome summons, and being so weak as not to be able to speak for God, he lifted up his eyes and hands to heaven in token of victory, and so entered into the Paradise of God.

But while the Lincoln Society were mourning their loss in the death of Mr. Hannah, a pleasing revival of the work of God took place. From the very time that his funeral sermon was preached, an influx of regular hearers was witnessed, and many were savingly converted to God. In the spring of the ensuing year (1801,) this shower of blessings was most copious, at which time, on Easter Monday, during a watchnight held in the Chapel at Lincoln, there were eighteen souls in distress for the pardon of sin; and the day before this had been marked with outpourings of grace; for on it Mr. Padman, now a travelling preacher, had been added to the chosen of the Lord, by obtaining pardon and peace with God. About the same time also their number of local preachers in the City was augmented, the list containing the names of Messrs. Joseph Mawer, Daniel Isaac, Richard Watson, John Bedford, and William Mawer. These circumstances, taken together, would doubtless have a very cheering effect upon the rising Society, and tend to convince them, that though God had removed Mr. Hannah, he himself had not forsaken them, nor was at any loss for men and means to carry forward among them his own blessed work.

Up to the period of which I am now writing, Lincoln and the Neighbourhood had formed a part of the Gainsborough Circuit. But as they were now about to be separated, and formed into a Circuit of themselves, this will be a proper place in our narrative to pause for a moment, and take a general view of what Methodism had done in the City and Neighbourhood around. And this object will be sufficiently accomplished, by giving the names of the places where we then had Societies,

with the number of members in Society at each of the places.

At Lincoln the number of the little army under the standard of Methodism was 99; at Newton, the oldest place, 24; at North Scarle, 22; at Bisthorpe and Girton, 38; there was a Society of 16 members at Spalfood, another at Harby of 20, and another of 8 members, at Thorpe on the Hill. At Boothby were 17 members, at Navenby 35, at Normanton 14, at Kelly 12, and at Sleaford 18. These places are now in the Sleaford Circuit. The Society at Scothorn was small, containing only 10 members; that at Nettleham contained 21, and the Ingham Society, including Fillingham, 22. The total number of places or Societies was *fifteen*, and the total number of members in those Societies *three hundred and seventy six*. Such was the progress which Methodism had made in this Neighbourhood in the spring of the Year 1801.

To supply these fifteen places with preaching, and to watch over the spiritual necessities of these three hundred and seventy members, as well as to lead or accompany Methodism in her further triumphs, two travelling preachers, Mr. Gates and Mr. Meek, were appointed at the ensuing Conference. What Methodism has since become, the narrative before the reader will continue to explain.

HISTORY OF METHODISM, &c.

PART THE THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

Lincoln made the head of a Circuit.—Strictures on Methodism by a convention of Lincolnshire Clergymen, noticed.—Persecution at Lincoln.—Thorpe.—Eagle.—Harby and other places.—North Scarle.—Bassingham.—Boothby.—Navenby.—Sleaford, &c.—Aubourn.—Waddington.—South Scarle.

IN the year 1801, Lincoln was made the head of a Circuit; so that that period may, therefore, be regarded as a new era of Methodism in these parts; at which time, in the City itself, the Society was in a flourishing condition, as was noticed in the close of the preceding part of this narrative. The congregation likewise increased, and the sittings in the Chapel began to be regularly occupied by persons of greater respectability, generally speaking, than had formerly been the case; so that in the minds of some persons at Lincoln, the tide of

public feeling appeared to be turning in favour of the Wesleyan doctrines and the whole of the Wesleyan cause. And what rendered this state of things more pleasing, was the peace and harmony which reigned among the little flock, and the consequent reason there was to believe, that they were fed in green pastures, and caused to lie down by the still waters of consolation.

But while they had peace and harmony within the fold, and had some prosperity, and growing marks of attention and favour from those who were yet without, every thing was not peace—the fierce lion and [the greedy bear walked without the fold, and growled to devour the harmless and inoffensive sheep. Indeed the progress which Methodism was then making in this County, generally, excited considerable suspicion, in certain quarters; and its secret enemies were neither powerless nor few. Not long before this period, the clergy of a certain District of the Diocese of Lincoln, convened, by and with the consent and approbation of the Lord Bishop of the said Diocese, for the purpose of considering the state of religion in the several parishes of the said District, published the result of their considerations and inquiries in what they called their *Report*. In this document they stated religion as being at a very low ebb indeed, inso-much that not even ‘one third part of the inhabitants of the parishes to which they belonged attended divine service,’ &c. &c. They mentioned several causes of the awful irreligion of their parishioners; and, among the rest of causes is the ‘*increase of Methodism!*’ They then proceed to describe Methodism, or, rather, what they thought, or wished others to think, Methodism to be; and

certainly one cannot but confess, that if Methodism had been what these gentlemen pretended to have found it to be, it was a very laudable thing in them to desire that it might be for ever chased out of the world.

According to them, the Methodist ministers were a *wandering tribe of fanatical teachers*. Some of them, they said, were *raving enthusiasts*, pretending to *divine impulses of various and extraordinary kinds*; they even practiced EXORCISMS, and MANY OTHER SORTS of *impostures and delusions*, so as to obtain thereby an unlimited power over the mind of the ignorant multitude. They denounced the reprobation, not only of particular persons and families, but of whole villages, and publicly execrated the Churches, as being nothing but a heap of stones, and wished an earthquake might overturn them. This may suffice as a specimen of the accusations. No wonder, therefore, since Methodism was so shocking to the eyes of this convention of Clergymen, that they should presume on recommending to the legislature such '*alterations and amendments* in the Toleration Act as would ensure the church from fraudulent *intrusion* and *encroachment*.'—I shall leave this string of indite-ments to its own fate, with this observation, that it was drawn up, or agreed to, at the Bull, in *Horn-castle*, as appears from the late Rev. Joseph Benson's reply to it, sold at 14, City Road, London, and which the reader may consult, if he wish for further particulars relative to this event. But the spirit of dislike which the *report* breathed against Methodism, and which was calculated to fan and to increase opposition, was alive and felt by the Methodists at Lincoln, much about that period of time. They had daily more or less disturbance and perse-

cution, and the growing insolence of the rabble, encouraged, as was believed, by some who should have known better, had been borne with too long already, and was becoming incapable of further endurance. They could not walk through the streets to their place of worship, or return from it to their habitations, but they were pelted with stones or brickbats; nor were they secure from molestation and abuse, even within the hallowed enclosure of the house of God, till they had brought two of their principal disturbers before my Lord Judge at the County Assize, and obtained against them a verdict which convinced them that even the Methodists were under the protection of the law.

I cannot record these facts respecting the opposition which Methodism then experienced at Lincoln, without cheerfully acknowledging the improving state of the police of this ancient place. At present we are not only free from open persecution, but believe, and are sure, that the Magistrates would suppress it at once, were it to appear in public as it was then accustomed to do. We hail this change as a token for good; and we look forward to the day when pure and undefiled religion shall trample on the vice which yet lingers in our streets, and lead all its votaries towards the kingdom of God.

While the events we have just recorded were transpiring at Lincoln, the prospect was brightening in the villages around. The Society was increasing at Thorpe on the Hill, and some good was doing at Eagle, where there had been a small Society for some little time. But the Society at Eagle, from its commencement, had fostered in its bosom the seeds of discord and distress. The person, in whose house the preaching was commenced in the year 1799, had peculiar notions on some doctrinal

points, and made it his business, as a brother, under the influence of the same opinions had done before him at Besthorpe, to tincture the minds of the members with the peculiarities of his own faith. The results were alike in both places : Disputation led the way, and disorder followed, leading confusion into their social assemblies, where peace and harmony and love ought to have reigned. Our own incomparable hymns were laid aside, as unsuitable ; and others, selected from Lady Huntingdon's, and other collections, were used in their stead, to the great grief of some of the members at that place. It was to no purpose that the disputants were admonished and reasoned with on the badness of their principles and their cause. The dragon still fought with the angel ; for the doctrine of unconditional election, seconded by its inseparable companion, unconditional reprobation, is a serpent that cannot be charmed into peace ! For the space of fourteen or fifteen years together, its tumults impeded the progress of piety in this village, and then rent the Society in pieces, as shall be shewn in its proper place.

Passing from Eagle to Harby, it is pleasing to find, that at that place, in the year 1802, the cause was in such a condition as to induce them to erect a Chapel ; and Newton also continued to be 'a city set upon a hill.' At South Clifton, and at Spalford, the preaching was continued ; and at Norty Scarle, about the same time, considerable good appears to have been going on. A Chapel had been recently erected at that place ; and the Society was growing in numbers and in grace. Nor were Besthorpe and Girton unvisited by those refreshing showers of divine grace, which at that

period were descending on many of the villages around.

In the year 1801 Methodism made its first public appearance in the populous and pleasant village of Bassingham. Mr. Dixon, a respectable individual in that place, had been seeking salvation for eight or nine years, and had occasionally taken journies as far as to Newark, and even to Retford, in order to hear the pure word of God. He had read many excellent books, on moral and religious subjects, and offered up many prayers to the Almighty; and his general deportment, also, had been that of sincerity and uprightness before the Lord; but his views, notwithstanding, were confused and dark, as to that special faith in Christ which is of such vital and infinite importance, that without it, it is not possible to be justified before God. But, at the time referred to above, his conceptions were ripening, and he had frequent conversations with Mr. Rogers, of Bassingham, about inviting the Wesleyan ministers to preach at that place; and when they had mutually agreed to do so, they certified, or gave information to the proper court, that the dwelling house of Mr. Rogers would thence forward be used as a place of religious worship, which act, on their part, placed it under the protection of the law, and so they immediately invited the preachers to come.

Here numbers flocked to hear the word, and not a few were happily convinced of sin, and earnestly fled from the wrath to come. Others obtained remission of sins, and were freely justified by the grace of God; and, among this happy number must be reckoned Mr. Dixon himself, his wife, and their female servant; all of whom, on the

selfsame morning, were made happy in God, and in the comforts and joys of the Holy Ghost. A Society was now formed in the village of Bassingham, and Mr. Dixon being most suitable for the office, was appointed to watch over the rest of the members, under the regular ministers of the word of God. This was agreeable to the Wesleyan custom in such cases; and, that it was agreeable, also, to the practice of the apostles in the primitive days of the church of Christ, has been clearly shewn by Lord King, in his book, entitled "An inquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity and Worship of the primitive church;" to which the reader may refer, if he think good.

It was the lot of this infant Society at Bassingham to meet with persecution, and to endure a great fight of affliction. But I will not engage in the task of narrating their sufferings at large. The reader will find more pleasure in being told, that, as the house was soon too small for the congregation, Mr. Dixon, who was possessed of ample means by the recent decease of his Uncle, who left him his property, provided accommodation for the Gospel upon a scale which was commensurate with the rising cause of God. This he did by first fitting up his barn for preaching, and afterwards generously building a Chapel, which was opened in the year 1802, by that eminent servant of God, the late R. C. Brackenbury, Esq., of Raithby Hall, whose praise was deservedly in all the churches of Jesus Christ immediately connected with the Wesleyan cause.

Passing onward from Bassingham, we find, in 1802, Mr. Hazard of Navenby also, as we just now saw Mr. Dixon, busily and piously employed in

erecting a Chapel or house for God. Eight or ten years before this period, when Methodism first entered Navenby amidst storms of opposition, Mr. Hazard first formed the resolution which he was now putting in practice at his own private expense. The neat Chapel which he thus erected, was capable of containing five hundred hearers, and must, of course, have cost him a considerable sum of valuable silver and gold. And as this was laid out without the hope or design of receiving any thing in return, save spiritual profit, and the joy of doing good, it will serve to unfold the strength of his piety, and his love for the souls of the people in that place. But great as this effort of his faith must have been, it did not exhaust the stock of his benevolence to the people of Navenby, which was not bounded even by the boundary of their need, but looked forward to mere possible necessity, which might not, in fact, at any time take place. For when he thought it possible, that, after his decease, if any one in Navenby might have the courage, he might not possess the ability to take in the preachers' gratuitously, he altered his Will, and directed his executors to apply, after his decease, the annual interest of one hundred pounds to the support of the Wesleyan preachers when they visited that place. Thus. 'He, being dead, yet speaketh,' yea, *acteth*—'*His works do follow him,*' unfolding themselves every hour, growing and ripening every day; for, although, since the death of Mr. Hazard, others have risen in Navenby who have gratuitously entertained the preachers as he did, the interest of that money is regularly devoted towards defraying the general expenditure of the cause of Methodism in that place.

As for the other Societies to the south of Lincoln,

I mean Sleaford, Normonton, Kelley, Scridington, and Matheringham, I must refer the reader to the end of the third part of the narrative before him, where I shall give him a Table, containing the number of members in each of them in the year 1801, and their numerical progression from that period to the year 1814, as well as that of other Societies, visited or raised up by the Lincoln preachers within that period of time; which is all I can attempt to do at the present, respecting the more distant places, not being furnished with materials, nor having room within the limits of this small volume, to enable me to give a particular account of them all.

The village of Aubourn was visited by Methodism in the year 1802. This was chiefly by means of Mr. Dixon, of Bassingham, mentioned above. After he became savingly converted to God, his love to the Redeemer, and to the souls of his fellow men, soon induced him to begin to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come, wheresoever he could. He did not wait till opportunities of doing this offered, but diligently sought for them, literally laying himself out in endeavouring to do good to the souls of perishing and rebellious man. Under the influence of this godlike feeling, and being become a local preacher, he requested the late William Lambe, Esq., of Aubourn Hall, to allow him to preach in the house of one of his tenants in the village; who cheerfully consented, and promised to be one of his hearers; but he had to encounter various difficulties in proving faithful to his word. Village preaching is always interesting. It has peculiar charms, at least to my mind, and is generally attended with good. The cottage was well attended; and, good

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being done, a Society of about twelve members was organised in the usual way; and Mr. Lambe was made leader of the class, which prospered in his hands till the day of his death. He also, very generously, built a very commodious Chapel in the village of Aubourn, at his own expense, which was opened and consecrated to the service of God in 1805; and in the blessings which it was a means of communicating to others, as well as in the good which he himself often received while worshipping God within its hallowed walls, he frequently felt no ordinary joy. I feel unable to pass from this subject until I have craved indulgence of the reader to add the following brief, and, I hope, not impertinent remark; namely, that it would be infinitely better for the community at large, and the oppulent themselves would act more truly in the spirit of enlightened patriotics, if the riches they frequently lavish in amusements and vice, were always employed in promoting the everlasting welfare of souls whom God has made capable of being happy as long as the ages of eternity shall last.

In the year 1802 the leaven of Methodism extended its influence to the village of Waddington, and a little Society was formed, which increased and grew about twelve years, till the Rev. Waldo Sibthorpe, B.D., became minister of that parish. It was then given up into his hands, and the cause of Methodism, as to outward appearances, though not its fruits and effects, appeared, for a season, to depart from that place. The case was this. Mr. Sibthorpe was pious; and his zeal to promote piety in others induced him to tread in our steps, so far as to establish meetings, similar to our class meetings, for the spiritual improvement of those of his

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In this village they were driven about from house to house, being first turned out of one, and then another, as violence, caprice, or interest dictated, till they were obliged, for a season, to abandon the place. Sometimes, when the preacher has gone, and found the door shut where he expected to preach, the elm, growing in the centre of the village, has extended its arms over him, and been witness while he has called upon the people to repent and turn to God. Such conduct may be termed *enthusiasm* by such as have no conception of the value of souls! But will it be regarded in that odious light by Him who bled on the accursed tree? And, to stimulate such as labour under similar discouragements, we may remark, that the seed sown, even at that time, in Heighington, was not altogether in vain.

While the work of God was thus prospering in various parts of the Circuit, the preachers, and the more active men of the Circuit, on whom the management of its affairs more immediately devolved, did not forget to provide for its continuance and future increase. They knew they could not expect an harvest, without a sufficiency of men to cultivate the field; and were unwilling that the vines they had planted should degenerate, for want of proper care. There were thirty three places now on the Circuit, and three travelling preachers; but as they were not thought sufficient, a fourth preacher, in the autumn of 1813, or following spring, was called out to their assistance; and, at the ensuing Conference, his regular appointment to the Circuit was obtained, to supply these places with preaching and proper *pastoral care*.

Having arrived at this period of our history of Methodism in the Neighbourhood and City of Lincoln, we must suspend the narrative a little, and pay a tribute of respect to one who had laboured in the cause, but who was now called to leave it in the hands of others, and enter on his reward in heaven. This was Mr. John Dixon, of Bassingham, who may justly be stiled, 'the father of Methodism' in that place.

When he was yet young, and under serious impressions, he fell in with the writings of Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher ; and, as these valuable books were not his own, but borrowed, and were soon to be returned, he not only perused them with the greater care, but transcribed, verbatim, the rules of the Society, Mr. Wesley's sermon on the new Birth, and his treatise on Christian Perfection. This will sufficiently evince his desire of religion, and thirst for religious knowledge, at that early period of his life, when he had not the privilege of attending the outward means of grace, his uncle, with whom he lived, being averse to every thing of that description.

In 1798, he was favoured, while on a visit at Nottingham, with the first opportunity which he ever embraced of hearing the Methodists ; and, from that time, when he could do it unknown to his uncle, he occasionally took journies of ten, or even more than twenty miles, to hear preaching on the Lord's day, and afterwards returned home at night. But as his desires for the means of grace increased, his uncle, who discovered his growing seriousness, opposed his wishes, which tempted him to leave his him ; from doing which he was prevented, only by

the thought, that it would be unjust, as his uncle had taken him when a child, and nourished and brought him up.

He, therefore, continued with his uncle ; and, by assiduous attention to his concerns, endeavoured to discharge his obligations, and so satisfied his uncle, that, at his decease, which took place some-time after, he left him his estate, as was mentioned above.

Mr. Dixon now entered on the married state ; and, as I have already related, introduced the Methodists into the village of Bassingham.

Mr. Dixon was an ardent lover of the great and distinguishing doctrines of the Wesleyan Creed, and of that excellent discipline by which the body of Methodists is preserved ; and, as a local preacher, a class-leader, and member of the Quarterly Meeting of the Circuit, which he usually attended, gave his cheerful assistance to the support and application of our principles and rules. Two days before his lamented decease, being asked by a friend, what he thought of religion in general, and of Methodism, and the christian ministry in particular, he replied, 'They now appear in a more glorious and exalted light than ever.' Then, grasping the hand of his friend, he said, 'Defend Methodism ; for Methodism is of God ; particularly the great doctrines of the 'witness of the Spirit,' and 'christian perfection.' Hold these up to the people, not only as doctrines which it is their duty to maintain, but their privilege to enjoy.'

As a minister of the gospel he was more a 'son of thunder' than 'of consolation.' He loved to ex-

hibit Christ amidst the terrors of Sinai, or on the throne of his glory, descending sublime amidst clouds and darkness, and a pompous train of angels, to judge the world. Hence his mind seemed peculiarly fitted for awakening sinners; and his ministry, adapted by Providence to the then state of the towns and villages where he preached, was crowned with great success.

His last interview with the Society at Bassingham, which was about three months prior to his decease, when, from the weakness of his body, he had no hope of meeting them together again, was truly affecting. It was in the Chapel at Bassingham, when they were met by the preacher to renew their quarterly tickets. When the preacher spoke to him, as to the state of his mind, he was very much affected, and quite overcome. But, after his feeling had subsided a little, he was able to speak, and proceeded thus: 'The time is now come when I must leave this dear people!' And then turning to the Society, and addressing himself expressly to them, he added these words: 'The weight of God's cause (meaning at Bassingham) will now rest upon you; and woe be unto you if you let it sink.—I have had much to bear, as many of you know, and to fight against pride, prejudice, and persecution; but God has been with me, and will be with you. The cause is the Lord's, and will surely stand.' After he had said this, amidst the tears of his friends, he retired, in much weakness, from the Chapel; and, on the 5th of December, 1814, being in the 38th year of his age, his spirit was removed to the Paradise of God. For more particulars respecting the experience and death of Mr. Dixon, the reader may consult an excellent and

well written Memoire of him, published in the Methodist Magazine for the year 1817, from which the substance of the above has been chiefly taken. We may now resume our narrative again.

As the influence of Methodism increased in the villages where it had been planted, it created a necessity for the erection of new Chapels. Accordingly, in 1814, the commodious Chapel in the village of South Clifton was built, and the late Edward Higgatt, of whom it was said, when he first brought the Methodist to that place, that they would 'ruin him,' had been so blessed in his temporal circumstances by turning to God, that he was able to give land to build on, and money, towards the erection of that sacred place. Mr. H. was a plain, honest, good man, a streight-forward Christian, and died a few years ago in peace with God.

Here we may resume the case of the village of Boothby again, which we left at a former period of this work, in the peaceable enjoyment of the means of grace. The storms having blown over, no person would enjoy the succeeding tranquillity more than John Mayfield himself. He had manfully borne the burden and heat of the day, lived down all calumny and reproach, and established such a character for sterling worth, uprightness, and integrity, as bad defiance to impeachment; nay, he had done much more than this; for the conduct of this Shepherd, both in his civil and religious capacity, had gained him so much esteem in the whole of the village and neighbourhood, that *If there be a truly good and conscientious person in the world, that person is John Mayfield*, became a sort of proverbial saying among all who knew him. He was held in such

veneration, that men of literary attainments, and sound piety, would visit his house, where, sitting like little children at his feet, they listened to his salutary conversation, which was full of the savour of heavenly wisdom, and was such as became the Gospel of Christ. So that no man who had the least relish for spiritual and divine things, could remain long in his presence, without obtaining considerable good. So greatly did God honour this truly good man.

At the time of which I am now writing (1813) Methodism at Boothby, and the welfare of the souls of the people in that place, had occupied the warmest desires of John Mayfield's heart for the space of twenty three years, and he was now sixty six years old ; so that hoary Time had snowed upon his head, and he was grown wrinkled in the service of the Lord. We read, in the sure word of God, that 'the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.' This radiant honour, therefore, sat shining on the brow of Mr. Mayfield, who never, perhaps, felt more for the real interest of religion in his native village than at this time ; which the following circumstance will sufficiently explain. One day he requested a private interview with the Rev. J. Furness, at that time superintendent of the Lincoln Circuit, which was of course cheerfully granted. The hoary and pious Shepherd then took from his pocket his *Will*, and, handing it over to Mr. F., requested him to 'read that.' On perusing the document, and finding its contents to be more than he expected, considering his occupation, and the decent manner in which he had maintained and educated his children, Mr. F. was not a little surprised, and said, 'Why, John,

how is it that you are possessed of so much property to leave for the benefit of your relations?' His answer was, *That Christ had multiplied his little income almost as remarkably as he did the loaves and fishes in the days of his flesh; and that, since God had been so kind and gracious to him, he wished to manifest his gratitude by doing some thing for his blessed cause.* He then added, *I have thought it possible, after my decease, that no one at Boothby may be able and willing to take in the preachers. I am therefore desirous to bequeath TEN POUNDS, and that the interest of it should be applied to their maintenance as long as they continue their visits to Boothby. But, should the Lord incline any one to entertain them free of expense, my wish is, that in that case it should go towards defraying the general expenses of the Circuit.*— Thus did he think of religion for the time to come. And, as the Wesleyan preachers since the death of Mr. Mayfield, have been freely and generously entertained at Boothby, at the very house where his early persecutors obtained their largest supplies of strong ale, the name of John Mayfield is regularly entered on the book of the Circuit steward, as a regular contributor, though dead, towards the support of the Wesleyan cause.

John Mayfield was born at Boothby, in the year 1747. He was serious when a child, and his gravity increased with his years. In early life, when detained in the fields by the wants of his flocks, this youthful Shepherd, on hearing the village bells calling the inhabitants to worship God, frequently deprived himself of food, rather than not to go to church, or rather than go too late. Neither was this an occasional thing; it was his constant prac-

tice till he was forty years of age. All this time, however, John Mayfield was not truly pious, as he had never been savingly converted to God. So that his works, however good in other respects, had not been pleasing to God, forasmuch as they had not sprung from saving faith in the Son of his love; for whatsoever springs not of this faith in Jesus, partakes of the nature of sin. Well would it be for many regular attendants on Churches and Chapels, would they but solemnly examine themselves in reference to their condition in this respect! If they are already fixed upon the Rock, the scrutiny would do them no harm; but if otherwise, though the discovery of their deficiency, as in the case now before us, might be late in life, it might not be too late for the important and necessary change to take place. When about forty years old, as stated above, John Mayfield received some good from the perusal of one of John Bunyan's little works; and from that time he saw that both himself and his neighbours were in the way that leadeth to everlasting death. This was just after the mob had deterred the Dissenters from continuing their visits to Navenby, of whose visits and preaching he heard at the time, but never went to hear them. But his mind was now undergoing a change; and as the pure Gospel was not preached in the church, he wished in his heart the Dissenters might visit Navenby again, and sometimes took journies of ten or twelve miles to listen to the words which dropped from their lips. But the journies he thus took did not always afford satisfaction to his honest and upright mind. He nauseated the food which was sometimes set before him as the pure Bread of Life, and felt horror to behold on the spiritual table the

doctrines of unconditional reprobation and the decrees, from which awful subjects his mind would recoil in such reflections as these—If this doctrine be true; if the final condition of every child of Adam, and the actions which lead thereunto, were unalterably fixed from eternity, so that whatever takes place in the world is according to the secret purpose and will of God, it must follow of course, that whatever takes place on the earth, of evil (so called) as well as good, must be right—there can be no sin in the universe—but how then can God judge the world in righteousness in the great and final day? *But shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* This was such sound logic and scriptural divinity as scriptural divinity and sound logic can never overthrow.

The time and manner of his becoming a Methodist have already been related, and how long he had been a member when he made his Will. He lived about eight years after that circumstance, and died in the month of September, 1821, full of faith, and in the 73d year of his age, leaving the cause of Methodism at Boothby in a good and flourishing way.

Though I have detained the reader a good while already in the company of this pious Sheperd, there is one circumstance more which I cannot but relate. After he began to hear the Dissenters, his wife being afflicted, and in the hospital at Lincoln, occasioned his frequently coming to Lincoln to see her, especally on the Lord's day, when he would take the opportunity of going into some Dissenting Chapel to hear a sermon for his spiritual good. His master heard of this, reproved him severely, and threatened to turn him

away, and to use his influence to have him deprived of his cottage and of his few acres of land if he repeated the offence. The strength of John's attachment to religion was now put to the test; but he was firm and inflexible, and his principles brought him out of this trial with great honour and profit to himself. For a while, indeed, he did feel some perplexity; but he still abode in the scripture, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me,' (Matt. xvi. 24,) and the consequence was, that his master actually discharged him, and employed means to get him ejected from his land. But let the reader now take notice of the kindness of God to this faithful and pious man. John's master had found him to be a very conscientious and trust-worthy servant, and respected him highly for every thing, save his religion; and John loved his master, who was every thing to him which a master could be, except in matters of religion. Religion, in short, was the only thing which stood between them, separating them, like a river, which neither was inclined to pass. John *stood still* to see the salvation which God would work out for him: and his master took another Shepherd into his employ. In a short time, however, his flocks altered in their appearance; and he began to wish for his old and faithful Shepherd again, and sometimes expressed himself to that effect. Being likewise a great breeder of rams, when the time of sheep-shearing arrived, he felt a particular wish for the careful assistance of John in that difficult operation. But here a perplexity arose in his mind. 'How can I ask such a favour,' said he to himself, 'of a man whom I have ill-treated?' and judging of John's disposi-

tion and principles from his own, he concluded, that 'if he applied to John, he should meet with a denial, as he made himself sure that he could not, in so short a time, have forgotten the injury.' But this gentleman did not know the nature of true religion. When he tendered the proposal to John, though in a distant way, he found he had forgotten it, and was ready to serve him, though it was only for the temporary purpose of shearing his sheep that the service was now required. 'Sir,' said John, promptly, and with christian urbanity, 'I am both ready and willing to clip your rams; and I bless God, that he enables me, not only to forgive those who have been mine enemies, but likewise to pray for them and to do them good.' These words so melted down the heart of John's master, that he speedily took him into his constant service again.

The Spring of the following year (1815) gave to Nettleham their Chapel, which was opened on the 19th of March, as was that in the village of Welton on the 26th of the same month.—It is pleasing even to trace this rapid succession of Chapels in the villages, as it speaks much for the strong influence of religion on the minds of the people at that period, and is proof that the ministry of the word had not been in vain. The spirit of Methodism is a stirring spirit. It is love to God, and charity to men. It breathes good-will to all.

And this will be still more manifest when we reflect, that, in this year (1815) was also built the present Methodist Chapel in the City of Lincoln, and consecrated to the service of God, and the benefit of the growing population of the place.

About twenty seven years had elapsed since the first Methoist Chapel was built in this City ; which, considering the infancy of the cause at that period, was an illustrious effect of their piety, entitling its builders to a place in the affectionate remembrance of their successors. Since that period, a progressive increase at Lincoln had trebled their numbers and resources, and rendered a larger place indispensable to the convenience of the worshippers, and the further increase and improvement of the cause. Such being the state of things, and the Society containing men who had done much and were willing to do more for an interest that was dearer than life, it was not likely that pecuniary considerations would successfully militate against their design. Even men of the world, when their hearts are set upon an object, can, generally, find means to accomplish it. How much more the genuine believer in God, who has Jehovah for his helper, and who knows his labours shall not be in vain in the Lord. They, therefore, adopted the usual methods in such cases ; and, in due time, the Chapel was opened for the service of God.

Many a heart was glad on this interesting occasion ; and, among other circumstances which swelled the tide of joy, was that of their having, among other preachers employed on the occasion, the Rev. R. Watson, a native of Lincoln, and who had seen other days and other scenes, as to Methodism, in this City, when he was first brought to God among the people, and took his lot of reproach and persecution among them, first as a private member, then as a local preacher, rejoicing in his portion of obloquy and scorn.—‘ What has God wrought !’ was doubtless the language of many a

glad heart on that joyous occasion; while hope, on tiptoe, stood looking forward to still brighter days. Some of these men are since gone to their reward in heaven. Others are still at their post, hoary with honourable labours, but still taking pleasure in their heavenly and protracted toils.

CHAPTER IV.

Observations respecting the contents of this chapter.

—Normonton.—Metheringham.—Martin.—
Sleaford.—Welbourn.—Wellingore,—Broughton.

WHEN I first undertook to draw up the narrative which is before the reader, I had no thought or intention of crossing the boundaries of the present Lincoln Circuit, nor did I of course inquire particularly into the origin or present state of Methodism in the villages beyond it; but having departed from my original purpose with respect to Boothby and Navenby, I feel induced, by various considerations, to take additional liberties with myself with regard to a few other places.

As to the particulars about to be related in this chapter, I must just remind the reader, that they did not come into my possession in time to be given in their proper place, so that they will appear in this narrative a little out of order in that respect—a circumstance which the candid reader will readily

overlook ; and I must further observe, with respect to the places about to be mentioned, that I shall say all I have to say about them at once, that I may be under no necessity of recurring to them again.

The first place is Normonton, which claims priority of consideration because of its antiquity as a station for Methodist preaching. But is not this an ungrateful soil ? It has yielded little fruit for such a series of labours as has been devoted to its cultivation ; (50 or 60 years at the least—and they had but 14 members in Society in 1801, and but 15 in 1814.) Can any good reason be assigned for this ? —Has God withdrawn his loving kindness from this place ? will he never visit and revive it again, that his people may rejoice in him ?

The indefatigable Mr. Hannah visited Metherringham, and met, as was usual in those days, with a roughish reception. He took his station in the street, and preached, to as many as would hear the Gospel of God. Afterwards a poor man, living in a town-house, suffered them to preach within his doors, till a house was hired for the purpose. In the latter end of the year 1801 a Society was formed, which consisted, in the month of June following, of 22 members. A larger place of worship was obtained, and fitted up in the form of a chapel, where God deigned to meet and to do them good. In 1803 they had 25, and the year after 31 members in Society. The next year they added 5 members ; and in 1808, their total number in Society was 44. It is pleasing to witness that gradual progress in christian Societies which appears to have attended the ordinances of religion in this populous village ; beauty and order rising, as at

the creation, out of darkness and confusion, and making nearer approximations towards perfection from day to day. Not long ago a respectable Chapel was built by the Methodists in that place, which is a pleasing monument of their continued prosperity, and a proof of their genuine attachment to the cause of God. May the Lord increase them a hundred fold.

The village of Martin was visited during the summer of 1807. There was neither Church nor Chapel at that place; so that the people seemed literally to be 'as sheep having no shepherd'—no man cared for their souls. In days of old, the glorious Redeemer was 'moved with compassion towards' such, and 'he began to teach them many things.' Can we be Christians if something of the same mind dwelleth not in us? and can his disciples deserve stoning for labouring to tread in his steps?—A person of the name of Andrew was the first in that village to take the preachers in. Colonel King having property in Martin, Mr. Andrew, who was one of his tenants, applied to him for land upon which to erect a place for the worship of God; and I am happy to record that the Col., not only granted the land in the most cheerful and obliging manner, but expressed a degree of pleasure, if I am rightly informed, 'that any would endeavour to do good to the inhabitants at that place.'

Who is not able to see the finger of God in this? The Col. was no Methodist, not even in principle; but the hearts of all men are still under the control of the Almighty, who, in days of old, said of Cyrus, a pagan monarch, 'who had not known Him,'—'he shall build my city, and he shall let go

my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.' (Isai. xiv. 13.) And if the adoring philosopher can recognise the wisdom and power of the Almighty as distinctly in the movement of a worm or an insect as in the motions of the universe, why ought not the Christian to do the same with respect to the events which have reference to His spiritual kingdom, and the conversion of the souls of the children of men.

I have but little information, having made little inquiry, concerning the origin and progress of Methodism in the town of Sleaford. I am informed, however, on pretty good authority, that the preachers from Newark first visited that place, about the year 1798 or 9. But be this as it may, the Methodists at Sleaford were small and feeble, in regard to their number, in the year 1801; for, according to the entry in the Circuit Book, made about midsummer of that year, they mustered no more than 18 souls. Thirteen years afterwards their number was 44. I thought proper to furnish these items, and shall leave the reader to make any use of them to which he may feel inclined.

The time of the first visit of Methodism to Welburn, I have not been able precisely to ascertain. But in 1798, Mr. Joseph Frith, of Broxholm, (a local preacher, mentioned in a former part of this narrative,) Mr. Joseph Mawer, and a few others, were in the habit of visiting this, among other places in that neighbourhood; and it was on one of these visits that Mr. Mawer experienced that terrible rencounter which has already been mentioned in a former part of this work. But notwithstanding the opposition which they met, a Society, it seems, was actually formed, though it subsisted not long; for

in 1795 the violence of the persecution, which continued to rage, caused it to be broken up, and for several years after neither Society nor preaching was known at the place. But the seed which had been sown was not trampled to death. It had taken root in the minds of a few, who afterwards united with the Society at Navenby, till, in the course of some years, when the tide of opposition had a little subsided, the Society was formed afresh, and preaching restored to the village again. But Methodism at Welbourn has never been very prolific. The cause is still in continuance, but requires more copious descents of the dews of Hermon, to induce it to flourish and to bloom.

About the year 1796, or a little earlier perhaps, Methodism visited the village of Wellingore, in the ministry of Mr. Hannah, Mr. Watson, and others, who severally stood up in the street of that place, and called upon the benighted inhabitants to repent and turn to God. But these labours of love appear, generally speaking, to have excited no other feelings in the minds of the thoughtless inhabitants than those of the bitterest hatred and resentment, which produced those severe persecutions to which some general allusion has already been made. A small class, however, was formed in this place in 1799, which was considered a branch of the Navenby Society; for there was no regular preaching at Wellingore, nor could a house be obtained, on any terms or condition, in which regular preaching or prayer-meetings could be held, till about the year 1801; when the use of a poor man's cottage was at length obtained. The stream of piety in this populous village was then narrow indeed, but it flowed from the throne of God, and its pellucid current, though

slowly for a time, gradually increased, and was destined to fertilize, at a future period, the moral desert in which it was then beginning to run. I am not able, nor would it indeed be interesting to go into the annual variations of all the Societies mentioned in this work. Various chasms must necessarily be left unnoticed, over which the mind must pass in order to notice the more prominent features and remarkable periods of the working of the Grace of God. How long the Society at Willingore continued without a Chapel, I am unable to say; but the first Chapel which they occupied was built by the Ranters, who came into the village and afterwards suspended their visits to the place; after which their Chapel was purchased by some of our friends. They continued to assemble in this place till the 29th of February, 1827, which happened to fall on the Sunday, and was marked by a wind uncommonly high and strong. The boisterous element committed vast devastations on that day. Walls were levelled to the ground; trees torn up by the roots, fell prostrate before it as it swept along the land; hay-ricks lay scattered on the neighbouring fields; and houses and stacks of corn, were uncovered in every place, and much damage was done. A kind and gracious Providence, watching over the lives of the pious people in the village of Willingore, preserved many of their lives from death on that day; for the wind blowing full on the western end of their Chapel, forced it into the inner part of the edifice, and, as there was no gallery to obstruct the fall, hurled it with one tremendous crash upon the floor, and then rushing furiously forward through the building, bore down the eastern wall, and laid that also flat on the ground. Thus were they deprived at once of their place of

public worship. It was about the middle of the day when the circumstance happened, so that no person was in the place. Had they been worshipping God at the time, the consequences which might have attended it may easily be conceived.

They remained without a place of worship until the summer of that year, when a new Chapel was built. The conduct of the poor members of this Society, in reference to their new Chapel, deserves to be particularly noticed, not only as a proof of their piety and love to the house and worship of God, but as it exhibits how much may be done by the poor, and such have *no money*, when their minds and hearts are fully bent on the accomplishment of any thing good ; and it may serve also to stimulate the poor to action, when any valuable object is on foot, and induce them with cheerfulness to be ready for all good works. As the days were long, most of the Society, both men and women, volunteered to labour gratuitously towards the re-building of the house of their God, after the labour of the day by which both themselves and their families were to be supported were brought to an end. Their services were accepted, and they engaged in clearing away from the ground the ruins of the former house, in digging the foundation for the new one, in cleansing the old bricks and materials from the lime and plaster which adhered to them, and so making them fit to be used again ; they dug all the sand to be used in the building, and conveyed it to the proper place, levelling the field again which had thus been excavated by their work ; and, as the water for the lime had to be procured from a distance, it being a dry season, they fetched that also up the cliff, as it was needed for the work. Thus

were they all very laudably animated by the same spirit of zeal for the honour and glory of God ; and their spirit appears to have been like that of the pious Nehemiah of old, when he wrought with his companions, and builded the walls of Jerusalem from day light till the *stars appeared*, and who encouraged his companions, when about to begin the work, by saying ‘ The God of heavens, he will prosper us ; therefore we his servants will arise and build.’

Thus the work, in which these villagers were employed, went on, and, in due time, was happily brought to an end. The day of its consecration to God would gladden their hearts, and be attended with songs of thanksgiving and praise. The word of the Lord delivered therein was attended with enlightening and convincing power by the Holy Ghost, and soon a pleasing revival of the word of God took place, as if to reward their recent and pious labours to promote the glory of God. The more visible symptoms of this Divine influence were first manifested during a prayer-meeting, which was held in the Chapel in the Christmas week. While they were engaged in solemn prayer to God for his blessing, the power of God came down upon them, so that one person, being distressed on account of sin, began to cry aloud for mercy on her soul. Nor was this the only instance of the kind ; others, also, who felt themselves in the same condition, groaned to be delivered from the wrath of God, which they saw hang over their head. (John iii. 36.) And as this feeling of conviction of sin spread from one to another, as it continued to do for five or six weeks together, their Chapel was numerously attended, and the means of grace, particularly their meetings for

mutual prayer, through the strong desire they had for mercy and grace, were often continued much longer than on other occasions—a practice which, however objectionable it might be, if attempted to be adopted as a general plan for ordinary occasions, is perfectly justified, in reference to such special occasions as that which is now before us, by the purest dictates of reason, the conduct of the patriarchs and prophets of old, and the example of the Saviour himself, who, on some occasions, protracted his seasons of devotion, and spent whole nights in solemn and fervent prayer to God; and few cases, perhaps, of revivals of religion or outpourings of the Spirit are to be found on record in the annals of the Church of Christ, in which the people concerned therein were not powerfully prompted, I will not say instinctively, but by the Holy Ghost, to protract their prayers and supplications in a similar way; nor have such omnipotent pleadings been offered to God in vain. But as in the course of this narrative I may find it needful again to take some notice of prayer-meetings of this description, I shall dismiss this case which is now before me with the remark, that in the space of about five or six weeks, the Wellingore Society at the time I am now referring to, experienced an increase of upwards of thirty souls, many of whom were made happy in God. It is pleasing to be able to add, that now in the village of Wellingore—the place in which about 28 years before, no place could be obtained, on any terms whatever, in which so much as a prayer-meeting could be held—there are many prayer-meetings held in many of the private houses, and there is scarcely a house in the whole of that village in which a prayer-meeting might not be held at any time, if it was thought needful or were re-

quired. Could any power but that of God produce such a change in the opinions and views of a large and populous village in so short a period of time?

While yet in this neighbourhood, we may descend from the Cliff into the village of Broughton, which is also a populous and very pleasant place. Before 1812 (the time of the commencement of Methodism here) various attempts are said to have been made on its moral darkness and destitution, but with little or no effect, as the means of grace, particularly the ministry of the Gospel, could not be permanently established, for want of a room wherein to preach. Mr. Dixon, of Bassingham, (whose death was recorded above) with his characteristic zeal for the good of souls, and the glory of God, is said to have tried to remedy this evil in the following way, till some other measure could be brought into effect. The quakers had a meeting-house in Broughton. And Mr. Dixon, knowing that their itinerating speakers are frequently allowed the use of our Chapels, thought he might venture to ask the same favour of the Friends at Broughton and hoped to meet with reciprocal indulgence, but, was mistaken; the friend who was applied to coolly replying, 'We never allow our own people the use of our Meetings on their *first* application; we always take time to think—I must think about it first.' And he so thought as to deny Mr. Dixon—the very thing which a consistent quaker might have been expected to do.

Other attempts to obtain a place to preach in are said to have failed, but in a very different way, until at length Mr. Higgatt, whose father introduced the Gospel into South Clifton, succeeded in purchasing a house and a little land in the village;

which opened the way for the word of life. For he no sooner obtained the possession of this property, than, reckless of all consequences which might arise from the ill will of those who had long opposed the introduction of Methodism into that place, he opened his house for preaching, and soon after, upon a portion of his premises, a neat Chapel was erected for the service and glory of the ever blessed God. Mr. H. had the good example and good success of his father to justify the conduct he was now pursuing. When his father was led to invite the preachers to South Clifton, he was a poor man, with a family of children to be supported by his daily toil. He was a shoemaker by business, and his neighbours told him he would certainly lose all his work, and so bring his family to ruin; 'for all the respectable people in that neighbourhood,' they said, (on whom his trade depended) 'were so opposed to Methodism, that they would utterly forsake and oppose him.' But he went on his way, trusting in the Lord, who gave him bread enough and to spare, and even caused him to prosper and grow in the world! His son, perhaps, in the village of Broughton, has experienced like kindness from the hand of a faithful and bounteous God, who has the treasures of nature at his command, and can bestow them on whom he will. But be that as it may, the salvation of souls is the thing which Methodism has always in view, in every town and village which she assails—trophies worthy to be placcd at the feet of the eternal Son of God. A Society was soon formed at Broughton, which, in August 1814, consisted of 14 members; and the cause has gradually prospered up to the present time. Methodism has often been opposed, and sometimes apparently cast down to the ground.

But when this is the case she generally rises up again, and rises to prosper and prevail; and shall finally spread her triumphs to the end of the world.

☞ I subjoin the following Table, which will enable the reader to see the progress made by the various Societies mentioned in this third part of our narrative during the period of 14 years, that is, from A. D. 1801 to A. D. 1814.

	A. D. 1801	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Lincoln.....	99	117	116	126	140	150	—	152	141	157	164	195	—	281
Newton.....	24	26	25	31	35	33	—	29	24	27	25	18	—	19
Scarle.....	22	27	23	20	22	25	—	23	22	23	22	24	—	19
Besthorpe and Girton.....	38	34	28	31	22	25	—	30	28	26	23	25	—	26
Scothorn.....	12	8	14	13	13	14	—	12	12	9	9	7	—	11
Nettleham.....	21	19	17	17	14	13	—	13	11	12	19	19	—	29
Ingham & Fill..	22	23	24	24	21	26	—	31	—	31	26	26	—	27
Spalford and S. Clifton.....	16	—	12	13	12	12	—	13	11	13	13	12	—	92
Navenby	52	75	69	62	70	68	—	71	70	74	74	77	—	12
Thorpe	8	14	18	22	28	28	—	23	19	12	21	21	—	17
Harby.....	20	26	18	15	16	16	—	17	16	17	18	20	—	25
Bassingham....	12	34	33	33	—	29	—	24	27	24	25	42	—	47
Normonton	14	9	10	10	10	10	—	9	11	12	14	13	—	15
Kelby.....	12	12	13	12	13	12	—	8	7	—	—	—	—	—
Sleaford	18	23	25	50	40	42	—	32	26	30	39	34	—	44
Eagle	—	7	20	20	16	15	—	14	14	14	15	24	—	23
Metheringham..	—	25	25	31	36	37	—	44	44	35	37	44	—	40
Aubourn.....	—	—	12	12	12	23	—	20	22	22	22	27	—	31
Waddington....	—	—	9	12	—	11	—	14	12	10	12	11	—	9
Stapleford.....	—	—	—	8	11	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fenton & Laugh	—	—	—	8	—	18	—	13	14	13	13	13	—	16
Skellingthorpe	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Martin.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	19	28	31	35	—	25
Saxilby.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	21	22	25	21	—	25
Barlings.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Welton.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	16	25	—	26
Branston.....	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	8	—	9
Broughton	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14

N. B. The Navenby Society includes Boothby, Welbourn, and Wellingore. Several small places are left entirely out.

HISTORY OF METHODISM, &c.

PART THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

Sleaford separated from Lincoln.—Carlton.—Hackthorne.—Fiskerton.—Nockton.—Heighington.—Waddington.—Harmston.—Swinderby.—Skellingthorpe.—Eagle, division and revival at.—Missionary Society, formation of at Lincoln.—Increase of the work.

IN the year 1815, the Lincoln Circuit was in such a promising condition, that it was thought advisable to divide it, and to form Sleaford, and the places in that neighbourhood, into a new and separate Circuit; which was accordingly done at that time. A pleasing state of prosperity in the Lincoln Circuit succeeded this measure, and perhaps was a consequence of its adoption, as it would naturally lead to renewed exertions on the part of those who were principally concerned in extending the work, and afford them some leasure

to give more attention to the places more immediately surrounding the City, whose inhabitants were still living in darkness and sin. The following places were consequently visited, about this period.

Carlton, where a Society was formed in 1815, consisting of 19 members, which continues to the present period, and has been productive of good. Hackthorne, where also a Society was formed, but which was afterwards given up. Fiskerton, about the same time, was visited by the local preachers, and there also a small Society was formed, which afterwards, however, was given up, and the preaching removed; yet a savour of good things was left in the place. Nocton was visited in 1815; but the preaching produced no lasting or visible good. In the same year Heighington was visited again, and with better success than on a former occasion. It is true the tender tree was even now planted with some difficulty in this village, and the rough winds blew upon it; yet it began to strike root in the ground, and in due season both blossomed and bore fruit. A small Society was formed, and the leader of the little class walked from Lincoln (a distance of four miles) and back again once every week in the discharge of his office, which he continued to do, amidst many difficulties and discouragements, for the space of three or four years. The Chapel at Heighington was not built until 1820; but we may notice it here to avoid the necessity of recurring to it again. Having with much difficulty obtained a plot of ground whereon to erect their intended edifice, they went round to obtain subscriptions. But there were some persons of note in the place

who opposed their design altogether, and used their influence to prevent others also from rendering any assistance in furtherance of the work, to the great grief and discouragement of the small and humble Society, and to others also in the village who were favourable to the cause. But these men, who set themselves in array against the pious proceedings of those humble individuals, were *all* of them soon removed out of the way, and in a manner which led some to suppose they were *removed of God*, as the work went on, and the cause flourished, without further molestation or hindrance from them. There are some in the village who have not forgotten the circumstance, but remember it for good to this day; and surely the removal of such persons as oppose themselves to our pious proceedings, in whatever way it takes place, is highly calculated to lead us to trust in Him who has said to the pious saint, 'Fear thou not; for I am with thee; Be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: They shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall *perish*. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that *contend* with thee: They that *war* with thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee. Fear not; I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye (*few*) men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.' (Isai, xli. 10, 14. (It is a fearful thing when the rich and the great fight against God by opposing the piety of his people.

The persecuting 'Herod' was 'eaten of worms, and yielded up the ghost.'

While the preceding things were transpiring at Heighington, Methodism resumed her attention to Waddington again. About the year 1816, the Rev. R. W. Sibthorpe left that village, as before related, when our people established preaching, gathered up a few of the scattered sheep, formed them into a little Society, and, in short, put all things, as far as they were able, into a proper Methodistical train again. And I am happy to observe in this place, that, on this occasion, some of those souls who formed the little re-organised Society of Methodists at Waddington were the fruit of Mr. Sibthorpe's ministerial labours in that place, who were thus brought into the Wesleyan fold, as on a former occasion, some of these souls who had been put under the pastoral care of Mr. Sibthorpe, were the fruit of the labours of Wesleyan ministers, and the seals of their apostleship in the Lord. The wide difference, on some important points of doctrine publicly taught by that Reverend Gentleman, and those which are held by the writer of these pages, and that body of Christians to which he belongs, is no reason why this public testimony to the utility of his labours in that village should be withheld.—The year after (1817) Waddington saw a good substantial Chapel built for the furtherance and accommodation of the rising Society and cause of God. In this undertaking a young man of the name of Clarke, then residing at Waddington, his native village, but now a respectable chemist and druggist at Hackney, rendered considerable assistance by his activity and zeal in obtaining subscriptions for the building; and it is but just to

state that many persons, both in the village and neighbourhood, came forward to help in a friendly and liberal way. Thus a place of public worship was provided for the preaching of God's holy word at Waddington, and such was the grace of God attending it, that in about twelve months after the Chapel was opened, the Society, including about ten on trial, consisted of about *forty* members, who, I trust, will he scattered and forsaken no more.

In the spring of 1816, after the failure of various former attempts, by Mr. Hannah of Lincoln, Mr. Dixon of Bassingham, and others, the preachers or friends in the Sleaford Circuit succeeded in forming a small Society at Harmston. Afterwards, however, this place was ceded to the Lincoln Circuit, and in some sense incorporated with Waddington, where the Harmston people frequently attend on the public ministry of the word of God.

Swinderby—a wicked and profligate village—comes next under our notice. It is written that God will 'comfort all the waste places of Zion;' that he 'will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.' The way in which God will transform the wilderness and the desert into a fruitful garden, blooming with righteousness, fragrant with the incense of praise, is, generally, marked out in a variety of places; the ordinances of religion must be introduced; the plough of the Gospel must visit those waste places; and he whom Providence employs to carry thither that all-powerful implement of moral cultivation, and first breaks up the ground, is an interesting person, come from what place he will. And to me it appears a singu-

lar circumstance, considering the number of pious persons who lived round about Swinderby at the time, that a *stranger* from Gunthorpe, in the Newark Circuit, should come to reside at Swinderby in the year 1816, immediately introduce Methodism into the village, and then, as if this were the only end for which Providence had brought him to the place, remove back again to the place from whence he came, where he resides, I understand, to the present day. Most men will acknowledge the Providence of God in the appearance and movements of such extraordinary characters as Wickliffe, Luther, Cranmer, Whitfield, and the two Wesleys. But great as the Wesleys were, and mighty through God, they did not accomplish the whole of that spiritual good which was wrought in their day. A solitary cloud though of the greatest magnitude, is rarely employed in watering and fertilizing the face of a whole country. Others, in the train of spring, though of smaller dimensions, and unseen, perhaps, by the indiscriminating eye of mortals, are equally employed in clothing the year with plenty, and crowning the little hills with waving corn. And thus it is in that stupendous economy of Grace which now, for almost a century, has been descending in abundant blessings on almost every village of our highly favoured land. But all things are of God. And if he works in some unusual or extraordinary way, or makes use of such instruments as are not usually employed,—it is to waken our slumbering attention, and lead us to ascribe the glory to Him, from whom all good must ever descend. Leaving, therefore, for the present, the darkness at Swinderby contending with the light of divine truth.

which Mr. Bladerwick introduced into the village, we may proceed with our narrative. We shall return by and by to witness the affects which have been wrought by the Gospel at this place.

The vilage of Skellingthorpe was visited by Methodism in 1817, and with better success than on a former occasion, though even now it was banished from the first house it entered, the steward of the estate assigning this reason for its ejectment, that 'The Governors of Christ's Hospital would have no Methodism upon any of their estates.' Thus a pearl of the purest lustre, if regarded as a mere pebble, may be indignantly rejected, and cast with disdain into a heap of common sand. But the exclusion of Methodism from the cottage, was a means of its earlier elevation; a neat little Chapel was soon erected in the village, where the word of the Redeemer was regularly proclaimed, and attended with pleasing appearances of good.

In the year 1817 an unpleasant division took place in the Society at Eagle, as before was intimated; and this sweeping whirlwind left only nine or ten members behind it. The cause at Eagle was reduced very low at this time. It was attended, however, with one very good effect; for the flood-gate being opened by the division, the turbid waters and the deleterious sediment which for some years had sickened all who had come to drink of the 'water of life,' issued like a torrent, and left the pool purer and clearer than before. The Society and congregation were no longer taught to believe, 'That the filial relation of the christian to Christ, is an unalienable privilege, and that the love of the Father to his dear children, the elect, is not capable of being lost, not even by wilful or de-

liberate 'sin ! Such syren symphonies as this, unhappily dignified by some as the higher branches and sublimer mysteries of the Gospel of Christ, but more properly styled the progeny of the doctrine of pagan fatality, and the remover of restraint from the whole family of the carnal mind, were, happily, no longer heard among them ; and the consequence was, a pleasing revival of the work of religion, and a delightful accession of members to the remnant which the division had left, so that from nine or ten they became upwards of forty in the space of a very few months. And that many of these were truly, and not in appearance only, brought to a saving knowledge of God, is manifest from the circumstance, that they continue steadfast to the present day. These are the simple facts of the case, the effects produced, in this instance, by peace and harmony, by the faithful preaching of the Wesleyan doctrines, and the blessing of God. Others may reason upon them as they think fit. But they serve to remind one of that pleasing description which the Psalmist has given us of the delightful consequences of fraternal unity and love. 'Behold,' says he, 'how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity ! It is like the precious ointment, that ran down upon the beard ; even Aaron's head. That went down the skirts of his garments ; as the dew of Herson, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion. For there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.' (Psa. cxxxiii.)

While the preceding events were transpiring in the country places, a spirit of Missionary zeal was descending on all the Circuit, so that in 1815 the Auxiliary Methodist Missionary Society for the

Lincoln District was formed in the Wesleyan Chapel in this City, and its operations and Anniversaries excite considerable interest, not only among our people, but among others also, throughout the neighbourhood, unto this day. Nor can this be a matter of wonder when the nature of the object of the Parent Institution; I mean The Wesleyan Missionary Society, is duly considered, which is that of sending Christian Teachers, duly qualified for the vast undertaking, to proclaim the Gospel to the ends of the earth, and bring the whole world into the fold of God.—I may here close this chapter with the remark, that from 1815 to 1817 they experienced, on the whole Circuit, a net increase of upwards of a hundred members; but they appear to have been stationary the following year.

CHAPTER II.

Reflections on the progress of the work.—Juvenile piety at Lincoln and children's class.—State of the Society.—South Scarle.—Heighington.—Progress of the work.—Death and character of Mr. Mawer, of Lincoln.

‘So is the kingdom of heaven,’ says the Redeemer, ‘as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of itself; first the

blade, then the ear, afterward the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.' This parable would be found to be exemplified in the case of every christian Society on earth, were their history, for any considerable portion of time, examined for that end. It would be found that in some years and periods no circumstances take place which strikingly mark the progress of the work ; so that while looking on the more outward and visible appearance of things, we resemble the anxious husbandman standing at a distance from his fields of growing corn. The clouds pass over them, descending in gentle showers ; the sun drops down in golden gleams, warming the mellowed earth and the newly moistened hopes of the farmer and village swains ; the gentle breezes blow. All the causes contributing to vegetation are regularly carried on before his eyes, yet he cannot, at the instant, perceive the corn grow. He must compare it with what it was a few weeks, or months, ago, in order to see the progress which it makes towards that maturity and perfection which his anxious soul desires it to attain.

Such appears to have been the state of things at Lincoln, about this period of time. The outward ordinances of religion were well attended, the word was faithfully preached, and God was with the people of a truth, watering them with grace, warming them with his love, and keeping their affections on the things which are above ; but not many sinners were converted to God.

In a vigorous and healthy state of religion, in a Society of any standing, attention will be paid to

the moral and religious condition of the young ; nor is it unreasonable or unscriptural to expect that even children will be converted and truly brought to God, which was actually the case at Lincoln not long after the period of which I now write. A number of children, belonging to various Methodist families, or connected with them, discovered such seriousness of mind, and concern for their future happiness, as bespoke them under the special influence of the Spirit and grace of God ; and as every thing affecting the progress of the work among us is usually mentioned at the Leader's Meeting in the Vestry, the case was duly considered there. The result was, that a suitable person was appointed to meet them once in the week, in order to preserve them from mistakes as to their religious experience, temper, and behaviour, and to give them such advice from time to time as their age and circumstances might appear to demand. These children were from twelve to fourteen years of age, and such as were deemed proper were admitted to attend the Lovefeasts once a quarter, and also to receive the Supper of the Lord ; and though some of them, as might naturally be expected, lost their good desires, a fair proportion of them have been regular and steady members of the Society up to the present day.

Can any objection be urged against this ? ‘ Yes — they were much too young to become regular members of a christian Society, or to receive the Supper of the Lord.’ If this objection arise out of veneration for religion, as is sometimes pretended, the *motive* is entitled to respect. But may we not ask whether the sacred Scriptures, or any thing really found in the nature of the case, gave rise to

the objection? or whether some mistaken view of the subject, does not furnish its only support? That children belong to the kingdom of God is beyond a doubt; (see Mark x. 14 ;) and if this text is supposed to mean *heaven* by the *kingdom of God*, and not the Church of Christ on earth, how they can belong to the former, and not to the latter in consequence of it, remains yet to be proved; but if we allow it to mean the latter, the case is decided at once,—little children are members of the Church of Christ on earth, and if the rulers and governors of the Churches, and all others concerned in this matter, do not ‘take them up in their arms and bless them,’ the fault may be theirs—let them see to it—but it can never be urged as an argument against that for which I contend.

That our national Establishment considers children of eleven or twelve years of age as proper to become visible members of the christian Church, so as to partake of the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, provided they are proper in other respects, is manifest from the *Order of Confirmation* observed in that Church, and from the circumstance that the bishops confirm children of that age; after which they are always elligible to be partakers of the holy Sacrament in any national church in the land. I shall forbear to go much further into this question, my principal business being to narrate facts; but, to furnish one example, which has come under my own notice in this City, proving that children may know and experience religion, as truly and as really as adults, and, consequently, that they ought to be encouraged to seek, and instructed and directed to hope for it from God, I will subjoin the following case of a deceased christian child.

This child was born January the 29th, 1821, and died April the 22nd, 1828. Being the child of pious parents, she was the subject of many prayers from the moment of her birth; and, as soon as her lips could speak, or her mind begin to think, she was taught to think and speak of Christ, and of things spiritual and divine. The effects of this were soon perceived in her manifest predilection for serious conversation and religious books; and, as her father and mother believed that all love of good and aversion to evil, in children as well as others, must ever come from God, they regarded this disposition as a proof that the Spirit of the Almighty was graciously at work with their dear little child. As she grew up, she would sometimes ask concerning particular persons, 'Do they love the Lord Jesus?' and when answered in the affirmative, she would manifest joy at the thought that they were likely to go to heaven. In like manner if a funeral took place at the church, by the side of which she lived, she would ask if the deceased person loved the Lord Jesus, and would manifest joy and gladness if assured that they did. Thus it was manifest, that the two great sanctions of our holy religion, the hope of heaven and the fear of hell, had a very strong and good effect on the mind of this little child.

I might here dwell upon her singular love of the holy sabbath, and the house and service of God; upon her fondness of such religious books as were adapted to her tender age; and, particularly, upon her attachment to the Book of God, which she was never weary of reading. Even before she could read the new Testament stright forward, or make out a single verse by herself, except by spelling the

longer and more difficult words, she would seek with uncommon diligence to find out particular passages which had been pointed out to her as peculiarly applicable to her case ; such, for example, as that which says, ‘Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come unto me ; for of such is the kingdom of God ;’ over which she would often rejoice as those who divide the spoil. This little child was the subject of sore temptation and distress of mind, arising from a fear that, *because* she was a child, God would not love *her*, not hear *her* pray ; and her anxiety on this ground was sometimes so great as to be truly distressing to those who were near her ; and the passage above was one of those passages of the holy Scriptures which had been pointed out to her by her father and mother, in order to inspire her tender mind with confidence and hope in God, in reference to herself ; and it had produced the desired effect. By the blessing of God it fully satisfied her troubled spirit that Jesus *loved children and died for children*, as well as for adults ; yea, for ‘*little children*,’ so that *they* also might ‘come unto Him ;’ and this conviction was such that it gave her peace and rest of soul, and a tranquilizing hope in the mercy of God.

And hence it appears to me, that, at this early age, this little child had a true and saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ ; quite as scriptural, and even as orderly, in its essential lineaments and properties, as the faith of any of the people of God, not excepting that of Abraham himself. In order to be satisfied of this, we may compare it with the patriarch’s faith as exhibited in the Oracles of God. We are told, for instance, (Rom. iv. 3,) that ‘Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him

for righteousness.' But this little child also believed God, and that in as special and personal a manner as the father of the faithful himself. Her mind, after some painful struggles of doubt and fear, on a point which related immediately and directly to her own personal interest in the Saviour, was enabled to give full credit to *His word*, and calmly repose in *His promise*, feeling fully assured, that Christ would hear *her* prayers, and suffer *her* to come unto him. Why then should we not conclude, that little Jane's faith was 'counted to her for righteousness,' and that she also was freely 'justified before God?'

I cannot go into all the experience and conduct of this little child in this place, nor would it comport with my present undertaking; otherwise it might easily be done. Suffice it to say, that her uniform conduct displayed that she lived in the fear of the Lord all the day long; and though her experience varied, (for to the end of her life she was subject to temptations,) and her joys and prospects beyond death were sometimes more elevated than at others, yet God was with her in her last sickness, and comforted her soul in the hour of death. Thus lived little J. R. in the City of Lincoln, as before intimated, and thus also she died when she was but little more than seven years of age.

We will now return from this digression (if it be a digression) and remark, that it was not merely, nor yet chiefly, in her attention to pious or seriously disposed children that Methodism exhibited her strength and vigour at the time of which I am now writing; she did it also in her timely and diligent attention to every other 'work of faith and labour

of love.' The Benevolent Society for relieving the distressed, of whatever sect or party, had been in existence for more than twenty years, and was still kept in a state of as vigorous and efficient operation as their resources would admit, and it caused many a poor widow's heart to rejoice. The Sunday Schools, by a goodly band of well-qualified teachers, of both sexes, were preserved in a state of efficient activity. Methodism too had instituted her Tract Society, and was carrying about these lamps of sacred and hallowing light, I mean the tracts, into the streets and lanes of every part of the City, thus gilding the abodes of darkness with gleams of glory from the sky. The Bible Society was not forgotten, nor unsupported, by such of our friends as were able to contribute towards its support. The leaders and local preachers, now grown considerable in their number, were regularly at their post, labouring to edify the Church which Christ had purchased with his blood, or to diffuse the Gospel, and save more souls from the jaws of hell and death; and the prayer-leaders, in their humbler, but important, sphere of labour, kept the same object continually in view. The same spirit was alive in the country parts of the Circuit as in the City; for the whole circuit was animated by the same desire, and kept the same object continually in view. In the meanwhile a Society was formed at South Scarle, chiefly of members who had gone to reside at that place from other parts of the Circuit; and, about the same time, the Chapel at Heighington was built, of which I have spoken in a former part of this work.

From what has been said, the reader will be able

to form an opinion of the strength of Methodism in this Circuit in the year 1818. Its growth from that period, for the space of five or six years, will be sufficiently marked by stating the progressive increase of accredited members in the whole of the Circuit, which I shall here put down for the reader's inspection. In the month of August, 1818, the number of members was 835. Increase the two following years, 5; the year after, 95; the year after, 65; the two following years, 50. Total increase from A.D. 1818 to A.D. 1824, 215 souls; and the total number of accredited members at this latter period, was 1050. As some of my readers, I doubt not, will be curious to know what proportion of these members belonged to the several Societies respectively throughout the Circuit, I will endeavour to gratify their wishes in that respect. In August, 1824, their numbers as entered in the Circuit Book stands thus: Lincoln, 428; Aubourn, 31; Bassingham, 62; Stapleford, 9; Swinderby, 19; S. Scarle, 10; Besthorpe, 21; Girton, 11; N. Scarle, 42; Spalford, 12; S. Clifton, 15; N. Clifton, 13; Newton, 13; Fenton and Laughterton, 12; Saxilby, 29; Harby, 27; Eagle, 40; Thorpe, 14; Waddington, 21; Harmston, 14; Branston, 17; Heighington, 23; Nettleham, 37; Langworth, 21; Scothorn, 11; Welton 23; Fillingham, 25; Ingham, 22; Carlton, 17; Skellingthorpe, 8: in all, 1050, bating the fraction. And hence it appears that on the ground where, twenty three years before, when Lincoln was made the head of a Circuit, they had but twelve places, and two hundred and ninety three members, they had multiplied into thirty distinct Societies, containing, in all, one thousand and fifty members. But the

glory and praise of all this was exclusively due to the ever blessed God.

We will now turn from these numerical accounts, and finish this chapter by taking some notice of one, whose character and connexion with Methodism at Lincoln, while living, and whose sacrifices and zeal to promote its interest, entitle him, now that he is dead, and beyond the influence of praise or blame, to a suitable degree of attention in this little work, —I mean the late Mr. Mawer.

When Mr. Mawer first came to Lincoln, Methodism was a purling stream. He was a member of the Methodist Society at that time, and also a married man; for he entered into that holy and honourable state when he was not more than nineteen years of age. Owing to various circumstances, which need not be recorded in this place, that period of his life was attended with severe and complicated trials, which probably served to mature his early graces, and form that excellence of character which afterwards so eminently distinguished him among men. About the year 1798 he first began to preach as a local preacher, and continued on the plan to the end of his days. Reproach and persecution attended his early labours in this department of the duty to which he was called by the Providence of God; yet he held on his way, his eye being constantly fixed on the recompence of reward. What his labours were, as a local preacher, may be estimated in some degree by a knowledge of the fact, that for the first twelve years, upon a moderate computation, he travelled annually not less than *five hundred miles*; so that during his life, his journies to the neighbouring places around, performed in preaching the Gospel alone, might fairly be estimated at ten or twelve thousand miles.

In the year 1801, when Methodism at Lincoln was suffering persecution, and a lawsuit became necessary in order to obtain peace and quiet, the conduct of Mr. Mawer, both as a witness on the trial and in other respects, was of essential service to the cause of God, insomuch that it was chiefly owing to his firm and judicious conduct that Methodism was crowned with a triumph, and its enemies constrained to hide their head. His conduct upon that occasion is the more deserving of remark, and the more worthy of imitation, on the following accounts:—He was then young in years, not more than twenty six, or between that and twenty seven; and he had not been long in business in the City, and must have perceived at the time that the spirited and decided part he was taking in that affair would be likely to expose him to obloquy and scorn, and to the ill-will of those on whom his prosperity in business might materially depend. Many, in his circumstances, having a wife and a small family, which was likely to increase, depending upon him, would have pondered these things so as to shrink from the cross, and, regulating their conduct on the false maxims of worldly policy and prudence, retire to the shade, during that season of trial and of reproach. But in Mr. M. was displayed another sort of spirit, a soul of an higher order and much nobler kind, that knew not how to fear the reproach and hatred of the ungodly, and would not abandon the post of duty, because it might expose him to trouble and distress; and the smile of Heaven would rest upon him on that very account.

No less remarkable was his conduct on another occasion, when Methodism at Lincoln was assailed in another form. This was in 1810, when Mr. Hett

and Mr. Neesham, as was named above, attacked Methodism from the press. It has already been stated in brief, that to the pamphlets of these gentlemen, Mr. Mawer published replies. Of such productions as Mr. Mawer's, and, indeed every other production, if we would rightly judge, and, especially, if we would use them as a mirror, to discover therein the mind and character of their author, we must take the hint which Pope has given us, and duly 'regard the author's end.' The end of Mr. Mawer was not the exhibition of literary talent, nor the acquirement of literary fame; neither did he seek to gratify a patron, or to obtain wealth by an extensive sale of the productions of his pen; far were such motives as these from his mind when he laid before the public his letters to Mr. Hett. *His end* was the same as in the transaction described above; it was to discharge a duty, and a duty of the highest order, a duty which he owed to religion and to God; so that losing sight of the particular occasion of his writing, which I have no wish to notice any further than is needful to exhibit the character of Mr. Mawer in its full and proper light, we may consider his spirited production as a strong and decisive proof of his sublime love of the religion of the Lord Jesus, and of his unalienable attachment to it under that form and in the persons of those men in whom it had been so unjustly and wantonly assailed.

Mr. Mawer has given us, in various passages of his pamphlet, a key to his sentiments and views on certain points of considerable importance, one or two of which may be noticed here. On the subject of the propriety of plain good men, of sound sense and genuine religious experience, preaching

the Gospel, he speaks thus : ‘ It is generally acknowledged, that what a man knows himself, he may communicate to others, according to the capacity he has for conveying his ideas, and the capacity of those under his instruction for receiving them. Hence the husbandman can teach husbandry, the mechanic mechanism, the tradesman his own trade, the mathematician mathematics, and the philosopher philosophy ; and if so, why may not one who is unacquainted with the higher branches of literature, yet possessing a knowledge of the leading doctrines of the Gospel, such as the fall of man, the universal depravity of human nature, the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, the gift of the Holy Ghost,—repentance, faith, &c. &c.,—teach these truths to others ?’ A little further on he says, ‘ I am satisfied, that the nearer a preacher can come to the common dialect of those whom he is addressing, the better he will be understood, and the more he will be likely to profit his congregation. What do three fourths of the congregations whom ministers, whether in the church or out of it have to address, know about the purity of language, subtlety of metaphysical reasoning, or the exact composition of a sermon ? God forbid that I should depreciate human learning, when it is well employed ; I know that without a measure of it there could not be even civilization, man would be both wild and savage. But I am at the same time well persuaded, that if the regular established ministers would condescend to stoop a little lower, so as to meet the capacities of their hearers, their labours would be much more useful.’ These reflections are replete with sound and sober sense. The following passage may serve to unfold his general character and conduct, both

towards the clergy of the established church, and towards all other men. A fine tone of christian feeling runs through the whole of it, and on the subject to which it refers, I am glad to be able to let Mr. Mawer speak for himself. It is addressed, of course, to the reverend gentleman against whom he had found it his duty to write, and will be found at the 39th page of his work. The following are the words to which I refer : ' You may rest assured, Sir, that the Methodists will never meddle with you, if you will only let them alone. It is not their business to oppose the regular clergy, (respecting many of whom they have the highest opinion, and hear them with the greatest attention at all opportunities,) but to oppose sin, wherever they find it. They wish to go quietly on their way, and desire as much as in them lies, to live peaceably with all men. But, Sir, while they see it their duty to love God, to honour the King, and to live peaceably with all men, they also see it their duty to labour, at least, to do all the good they can to their fellow creatures, by turning as many as possible from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. In this labour of love they desire to be found more incessant and more successful.'

That Mr. Mawer was firmly, and from principle, attached to the whole of the Wesleyan system and cause, I believe no one circumstance in the whole of his christian life ever afforded the slightest ground to suspect. In his pamphlet he sometimes calls the Wesleyan body, *Dissenters*. Mr. Mawer, of course, considered himself as a Dissenter in the sense in which he makes use of the expression. But he was not such a Dissenter as many who assume that character and name ; for it is plain from

the preceding extract that he held no *principles* which led him to *oppose the regular clergy*—he was in fact, as much a Dissenter from the Dissenters as he was from the established Church. Strictly speaking Methodism, while it wishes well to all parties who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, is in alliance with none—it will not coalesce with Dissent and cannot with the Church—Mr. Wesley himself, great as were his talents, and long as they were employed for that purpose, could hold no visible union with the Church, as a body, but was driven from her pale, and, by the over-ruling Providence of the Deity, a Providence expressive of his Will in this particular, as well as in a thousand other cases, was directed to move, like the heavenly bodies, in a sphere peculiar to himself, where God condescended abundantly to bless his labours, and to crown them from year to year with unparalelled success. Had Methodism been nearer to the Church or to the Dissenters, it is very questionable, perhaps, whether the good which has been effected by it would ever have been accomplished; and were it now to depart from its present position of labour and glory, its light would probably be eclipsed, and its course of paramount influence and usefulness might soon draw towards an end.

But in whatever light Mr. Mawer might consider himself and the Methodist body as Dissenters, and however firmly attached to his own denomination, the spirit of bigotry found no place in him. He did not consider genuine piety and real excellence of character confined to the body of Christians to whom he belonged; and it was no task to him to hold out the ‘right hand of fellowship’ wherever he found a conscientious and truly good man. Equally

catholic was his spirit and no less large was his heart in another important respect—his liberality in supporting the cause of religion abroad, as well as in contributing to its furtherance and support at home. Hence those Societies which are the chief glory of the British nation and of British christians received his most cordial approbation and most liberal support. I shall illustrate this trait in his character and enrich this page, by a passage from a Memoire of him, drawn up by the Rev. T. Galland, and published in the Methodist Magazine for the year 1825. Speaking of Mr. Mawer Mr. Galland proceeds thus: 'That was a happy day for him when an Auxiliary Bible Society was established in Lincoln. In his speech on that occasion, a letter from a friend records his having expressed himself in the following terms: *He had long wished to see that day; he saw it and was glad- He was not ashamed to tell the meeting that he had not always been in those prosperous circumstances in which he then stood before them. Every temporal as well as every spiritual blessing he knew he had received from the Author of that Sacred Volume, to promote the more universal dissemination of which they were that day met together.* In the Bible cause, indeed, and in the kindred one of Missions,' continues Mr. Galland, 'he was deeply interested; and in the details of their management, and the conducting of public meetings, he took a most active and useful part.' Such is the testimony of Mr. Galland concerning Mr. Mawer, and few persons who were acquainted with the original will conceive the likeness to be too boldly drawn.

As a leader and a local preacher, Mr. Mawer's labours were abundant, and his talents for those offices

ces in the Church, growing as they did out of a mind naturally vigorous and correct, and cultivated as they were by reading and reflection, and by being used for the honour of God, were not employed in vain in the Lord. He considerably promoted the erection of the present commodious Chapel in this City, and much of those anxious toils inseparably connected with undertakings of that kind and magnitude, devolved on him. He also was trustee for almost all the Chapels built in this neighbourhood, for the period of twenty years. Besides which, he held, at different times, the offices of the Society and Circuit steward, and was treasurer of the Missionary and other Societies connected with Methodism and the cause of God; all which, though they daily multiplied his cares, he undertook most willingly, and manifested the greatest satisfaction in being able to serve that cause which he so highly esteemed, and on which were suspended his dearest hopes, both in this world and that which is to come. As for the social qualities of Mr. Mawer, they obtained for him the most tender affection of his numerous family, for whose welfare he manifested the strongest and most unwearied regard. Among his numerous circle of friends, his happy method of improving conversation, his cheerful disposition, his love of peace, and his cordial and generous attachment, procured for him much influence, and no ordinary kind or degree of respect. He was, indeed, greatly beloved by all communities and classes of people, both in the City and neighbourhood of Lincoln; and his sudden and unexpected dissolution excited deep and universal regret.

A train of little incidents, ordered by Him who

directeth our steps, had unexpectedly brought all his numerous family, but one, to his own house that night, and he seemed remarkably pleased to have them all under his own paternal roof, little thinking that they had been thus gathered together to see their father die. Mr. Mawer himself had been previously somewhat indisposed, yet not so much as to be unable to attend to his business in the usual way ; so that neither he nor any of the family were at all apprehensive of the slightest danger being near. When seated at the supper table, about ten o'clock, he was observed to look round upon his family, consisting of his own children and various other domestics, with a smile of affectionate delight as they sat on either hand, and they, in return, were no less highly delighted to see him quite happy in their society. But they were now all listening to his departing observations, and severally, as he looked round upon them, catching the last glances of those eyes which were so soon to be closed by the cold damps of death. Mr. Mawer's race was now run. He moved his right arm, as if to carve the meat before him on the table ; and then, leaning a little to one side, sunk down towards the floor, when suddenly, as in a moment, his spirit was translated to the presence of God !

Thus died Mr. Mawer of Lincoln, on the 29th of April, 1824, in the 49th year of his age. The solemn event was improved on Sunday evening, May the 16th, by the Rev. T. Galland, in a discourse delivered to a very crowded and deeply affected audience from the following appropriate words : ' Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor devise,

nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.'—'How many die as sudden, not as safe!'

CHAPTER III.

Scothorn Chapel built.—State of the Circuit in 1825 and 6.—Death of William Lumbe, Esq.—Swinderby Chapel built.—Aubourn Chapel enlarged.—Good work at Aubourn, and other parts of the Circuit.—Welton.—Witness of the Spirit, citations and remarks respecting the doctrine of.—State of the Circuit in January, 1829.—End of the narrative part of this work.

MR TOWERS and Mr. Galland were about to leave the Circuit when Mr. Mawer died. But before they went away, they had the pleasure of seeing a Chapel opened in the village of Scotthorn, where Methodism had long been labouring to bring sinners to God. The design of its erection was, doubtless, to raise the interest of Methodism in that village, which had sunk into some degree of languor and decay; and it is still desirable that it may have this effect.

The changes from prosperity to depression, and from depression to prosperity, which are sometimes witnessed in religious Societies, are often mysterious, and may be attributed to that which is not truly and properly their cause. And, as the degree of prosperity, when there is any remarkable

influx of members into the Church, may seem to be greater than it really is ; (the net inclosing *bad* as well as *good*, and such as must afterwards be *thrown away* ;) so, a diminishing of the number of members, is not always a proof of the diminishing or loss of the good which had really been done. Neither can we always attribute the prosperity, or the loss, in such cases, to the instruments employed, so as to be able to say with certainty, that but for them the effects which happened would not have taken place. When the disciples walked no more with Jesus, but forsook him, shall we venture to say that its true cause was in the Son of God ? I do not pretend, that man may not injure the work of religion, as well as promote it ; but that we should form our opinions upon the principles of caution and charity, in every case of the kind.

Three preachers were generally employed on this Circuit during the time that Mr. Towers and Mr. Galland were here ; Mr. Galland, who had the means within his own power, generally keeping a young man to assist him, though he neglected not any portion of his own work on that account. Thus the places had an abundant supply of preaching and of pastoral care, and considerable numbers were added to the Societies. All these places and Societies, however, were left to be supplied by their two successors alone ; and the consequence was, that they had less preaching, and less pastoral care, than in the preceding years. It would have been well could the Circuit have provided against the evil, by obtaining a third preacher ; and they had the example of their own Circuit, their former selves, for so doing, who, in cases somewhat similar, had acted twice in this way ; once, in 1805, and

again in 1813, when from the smallness of their numbers their abilities must have been less. This, however, was not done; and (whatever was the cause; for I will not pretend to determine) a considerable decrease of numbers (150) took place, during the two following years,—a circumstance which must have been alike painful to the preachers and to the friends.

In the latter of these years the Circuit sustained another serious loss in the death of William Lambe, Esq., whom we have before had occasion to name. Mr. Lambe, after his conversion to God, which was sound and genuine, had the high praise of being a humble follower of the meek and lowly Jesus to the day of his death. He had the talent of wealth and influence, which he consecrated to God and used for his glory alone. He was for many years one of the stewards of the Lincoln Circuit, and sustained that office at the time of his decease. For upwards of twenty years his example was a light to all around, and before he departed this life, he had the felicity of seeing several branches of his numerous family walking in the ways of piety and religion, and it is hoped he will have the higher felicity of meeting them in heaven. 'The memory of the just is blessed.' And to perpetuate the memory of Mr. Lambe, his bereaved relict, who trod the path of life and of piety with him on earth, and who expects to meet him again in heaven, has, very properly, caused a neat marble tablet to be erected in the Chapel at Aubourn, which by the pious liberality of her deceased husband was originally built.—A Memoire of Mr. Lambe, drawn up by Mr. T. Bainbridge, of Lincoln, was published in the Methodist Magazine for the year 1828, which the reader may

consult with advantage to himself. Mr. Lambe died on the 9th of April, 1826.

In the mean while, some good was going forward in some parts of the Circuit. The cause of piety and truth was gaining strength at Swinderby, and a Chapel was erected in the centre of the village, which has since been the means of considerable good; so that we may, not improperly, adopt the language of the apostle, and say, 'Now thanks be to God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in *every place*.' The Society in this village is now (Dec. 1828) in a promising state of prosperity, and, if the members, as I hope will be the case, be but preserved, by the grace of God, from the spirit of the world, and if they adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, they will prove a means of the more extensive diffusion of knowledge and genuine piety among the inhabitants of the place.

The two following years, that is, from August 1826 to August 1828, were attended by the continuance of that deficiency of week-night preaching and pastoral attention to the Societies throughout the Circuit which, in consequence of the increased number of places and the want of a third preacher, had marked the two former years. The Circuit might be said to resemble a ship kept out at sea by stress of weather, until, their stock of provisions failing, the crew are obliged to be put on short allowance; for some of the places were visited only once in three weeks, some once a month, and some others only once a quarter. It was the general prosperity of the work in the neighbourhood which

had led to this state of things, and almost produced a famine of the word in the land. The superintendent, however, did all he could to supply the places in the best way he is able; and, notwithstanding the difficulties of the case, he had the pleasure of perceiving that some good was done.

There was a good congregation at Aubourn; and it was thought advisable to enlarge the Chapel at that place, which was accordingly done. It was re-opened in the autumn of 1827: and, from the day of its re-opening, it was regularly as well filled as it had been before the enlargement took place. About Christmas following, this promising appearance was followed by a very gracious spiritual awakening and conviction of sin among the hearers, such as had never been witnessed at Aubourn before; and this again was followed, or rather accompanied, by a very copious descent of the Spirit of prayer and the grace of supplication, which occasioned the prayer-meetings to be held much more frequently, and continued longer, than had usually been the case. For the souls of the people being very sensible of their guilt and anxious for pardon and peace, and for grace to enable them to live to the glory of God, each one seemed unwilling to depart till he had obtained the blessing, and many found forgiveness and joy in the Holy Ghost. Nor was this heavenly visit, the visit of an hour or a day; it continued for weeks, yea, for several months in succession; during which time many souls were added to the flock of Christ, and, the Society almost doubling its number, a new class was formed, that proper attention might be paid to their future improvement and spiritual good. Joy and gladness were now heard in all the parts of the

happy village, thanksgiving and the voice of melody; and the pleasing language of the prophet might be adopted as descriptive of the feeling and state of things at Aubourn and the neighbouring village of Haddington just at that time. 'For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.' A lovefeast was held at Aubourn just at this time, which was made a blessing to many who attended it, while they heard one and another describe, as they were able, their religious experience and the manner in which their souls had been brought to God.

All this however was, afterwards, followed by some abatement, in their prayer-meetings and other means of Grace, of that intense feeling and sense of the presense of God which for some time past they had usually felt; yet the good which had been done was not lost, the converts stood firm, and the desire after godliness remained the same. The exceptions to this were extremely few. Moreover the preaching of the word was well attended during the whole of the summer and autumn following to the close of the year. A Missionary meeting was then held in the Chapel, on the 23rd of December, and, in a week or two after, in their meetings for social prayer and other means of God, they began to be visited by the power of Grace again. Such is the state of the Aubourn Society at this present period. They pray much. They pray simply, fervently, perse-

veringly, and for a present blessing.— Ye who know the Scriptures and the power of God, tell us whether such prayers were ever offered up to Him in vain?

About the same period (Jan. 1828) good was doing at other places also. Some were added to the Society at Bassingham, where the dews of grace had been gradually falling and fertilizing the once arid waste for almost thirty years. For the rains have not fallen in torrents, at one time, upon this village, and then months and years rolled on without their being permitted to see so much as a cloud. Their gracious visitation from the first day until now has been one continued spring ripening into summer; and the Society, like the mystic rod of Aaron, has ever presented to the eye both buds, blossoms, and fruit. Also much about the same time a gracious influence was witnessed at Branston and Heighington, villages contiguous the one to the other. The congregations increased delightfully, especially at the former place, which had been much behind the latter in this respect. The Chapels, therefore, in these places so far answer the end of their erection; and some souls are truly brought to God.—

I pass from these places to the village of Welton, where also, at the time referred to above, God was carrying on a very blessed work. This was the more remarkable and the more pleasing, because Welton had been reduced very low for some time prior to this. Our Sunday School had been given up, and means had been used to prejudice the minds of the populous generally against religion as understood and carried on by us. It was at Christmas, when a

Mr. Brown, a local preacher from the Grimsby Circuit, was over on a visit at Welton, that the more visible marks of this work were seen, when Mr. B. preached, and afterwards held a prayer-meeting in the Chapel with as many of the congregation as thought proper to stay. A powerful influence was then felt by many, and the spirit of prayer and of concern for salvation was excited, such as did not previously exist, and which continues, though not, I believe, in the same tone as at the first, even to this day — a period of twelve months. It has been checked, I believe, — perhaps by various causes, but — especially by one cause upon which some remarks may here properly be made. A certain individual in the village affected to take the alarm, and perhaps was really afraid, that if the prayer-meetings were continued, and the people of Welton taught to believe that a sense of the divine favour might be attained on earth, and encouraged to expect it directly and immediately from God, provided they sought it by genuine repentance and faith in the Son of God, incalculable evil was sure to be done. He therefore visited the people with great perseverance from house to house, and warned them against the prayer-meetings sometimes held in the Chappel, as if the plague or pestilence had been there. Such as were under conviction of sin, or such as had obtained the peace and favour of God, he strove to convince, the former, that they were deluding themselves by believing they were pardoned, and had the Spirit's witness of their adoption in their hearts, and the latter, that they ought not to expect it; and, at the same time, as a proof, not to be disputed, that what he said was right, and ought to weigh with them, he gravely

assured them that many 'sensible' and 'good men' had never been able to express themselves as having an *assurance* of being in the possession of the Divine approbation, or any thing beyond a *hope* that that was the case. This gentleman was a member of the established church, and possessed talent sufficient to do hurt, though I am very far from supposing he had any such design. Welton must struggle with difficulties of this description till God shall see fit to remove them out of the way.

As this little volume may possibly fall into the hands of this gentleman, and as I have spoken but little on the point which has thus come before us, it may not be improper to remark, that great and distinguished persons, not Methodists, but members and dignitaries of the church of England, have held and taught the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit,' or the true believer's 'assurance of his acceptance,' in the sense and manner in which the Methodists now insist upon that point. At the time of the Reformation, *Bishop Hooper* could say, 'And blessed is that man in whom God's Spirit beareth record that he is the Son of God, Rom. viii. whatsoever troubles he suffereth in this troublesome world.' (See *Foxe's Acts and Monuments*.) *Bishop Brownrigg* says, 'This is one great office of the Holy Ghost to ratify and seal up to us the forgiveness of our sins. In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise.' (Sermon on *Whitsunday*.) *Archbishop Wake* says, 'If to be secure of heaven and the glories of it : if to anticipate our final sentence, and to know we shall be justified and saved, when we come to die, a felicity greater than which no Christian can desire now, or hope

hereafter ; this we shall not fail of, if we follow the Apostle's direction, Let us be perfect, be of one mind, &c., *to this blessed assurance also, the Spirit of God shall bear witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God.*' (Sermons, vol. 1. p. 125.) Bishop Pearson says, 'It is the office of the Holy Ghost to assure us of the adoption of sons, to create in us a sense of the paternal love of God towards us, to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance. *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God. And because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his son into our hearts, crying Abba Father. For we have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. As therefore we are born again of the Spirit, and receive from him our regeneration; so we are also, assured by the same Spirit of our adoption; and because being sons, we are also heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, by the same Spirit we have the pledge, or rather the earnest of our inheritance.*' (Exposition of the creed.) Other testimonies might be added, but these are sufficient to shew, that the Methodists are not the only persons who have taught, in the most plain and explicit terms, that the true believer in Christ enjoys an assurance of his adoption into the heavenly family by the Holy Ghost, and that if these dignitaries of the Church of England were true and orthodox sons of the church to which they belonged, those gentlemen who disparage and oppose the doc-

trine in question, representing it as enthusiastic and dangerous, and likely to lead men astray from the truth, are themselves the very persons who are under the influence of delusion and deception—the degenerate and apostate children of that very community to which they belong.

This doctrine, however, is not taught by the Methodists because great and distinguished men, either of the church of England, or any other church, have held it in common with themselves, but because it is taught by higher authority, even the authority of God. It is the doctrine of those 'lively Oracles' whose truth 'liveth and abideth for ever.' And, being assured of this, it is hoped that those preachers and others who visit Welton, or dwell there, will not soon be deterred from calmly, yet firmly, enforcing it, both in public and in private, depending on the Almighty to give it a full and ready entrance to the judgments and hearts of the people, and to crown it with great and glorious success.

More recently other parts of the Circuit have been under a gracious influence from above, and souls have been converted to God. Fillingham is one of these places, and Saxilby is another. At Saxilby (Dec. 1828) eight or ten members were received into the Society or admitted on trial; and at the same time there was an increase of five or six members in the Society at North Scarle. At the close of the year it was found, that, in the whole circuit, the number of members had risen again to about *one thousand and twenty*, besides twenty who remained on trial. Since then, that is, during the present month (January, 1829) a very blessed work has broken out at Newton and South Clifton, particularly at the former place. But as

I will not speak with too much confidence of what seems but just beginning, I forbear to say more than this, that at both these places for upwards of twelve months last past, there has evidently been an increased attention to the public ministry of the word, which is generally the pleasing harbinger of all great and lasting good. And here I may put the narrative part of my undertaking to an end, and notice in the next chapter a few things which I could not so well introduce into the body of the work.

CHAPTER IV.

Backsliders from Methodism.—Preachers sent out, and local preachers.—Sunday Schools.—Number of happy deaths.—Remarks on the spiritual state of the Societies, and on the future prospects of Methodism in these parts.—Conclusion of this work.

IN every age of the Church of Christ, not excepting that of his own personal ministry, there have been numerous apostates from the ways of piety, and it would therefore be a very extraordinary circumstance if nothing of the same kind were to be connected with that revival of true religion, the history of which, under the name of Methodism, is now passing in review before us. Perhaps, indeed, it forms no essential part of this undertaking to take any notice of those who have foraken Methodism,

since neither Methodism itself, nor any part of Methodism, could be the cause of their abandoning that system and those people whom they once professed so ardently to esteem. Nevertheless it may be of some service, perhaps, or, at least interesting to some of my readers, to drop a few words concerning them in this part of my work.

Religion is not chargeable with the apostacy of those persons who forsake it. It is true the apostates themselves generally speak a language very different from this, and the world is very ready to believe them. Those who forsook the Saviour in the days of his flesh, affected to find an ample apology for their conduct in the doctrine of Jesus which they pretended was not to be believed. They said, 'This is a hard saying, who can bear it?' And from that time 'they walked no more with him.' But who will believe that the doctrine of the Son of God was intolerable to be born? The fault was in themselves, in the blindness and carnality of their hearts, and in the worldly mindedness of their spirits; for the 'yoke' of the Redeemer 'is easy' and his 'burden is light.' Thus also it has sometimes been with Methodism. The doctrine or the discipline, has been accused as intolerable; this is a *hard saying*, or that is a *hard duty*, has sometimes been the secret or avowed reason by which individuals have attempted to justify themselves when they abandoned the cause of Methodism, and walked no more with us. But will it be believed by any but themselves that the true cause of their conduct in this respect has existed either in the doctrine or discipline, or in the cause or people, from whom these individuals have unhappily torn themselves away? Let them examine themselves candidly respecting

the matter, and they will probably find that a change has taken place for the worse in themselves, and that they are not the persons they formerly were; that they are not so exact in their lives, so punctual in their engagements, so regular and constant in their family devotions, or so much in secret with God; and their judgment having undergone a very serious change for the worse, respecting these high and very important christian duties, it is more a matter of regret than of surprise that they have different views and dispositions respecting the people of God, and have utterly forsaken that cause which was once the source of their supreme delight. Man is subject to change: To-morrow he may be a very different person from what he is to-day: But religion, like its glorious Author, knows no variation; and is not the worse for being sometimes despised and vilely cast away.

Those who have forsaken Methodism in the Lincoln Circuit may be divided into two classes—such as have embraced other doctrines and modes of discipline, and now belong to other religious communities, and such as have fallen from the love and practice of piety into the love and practice of sin. Those of the first class may again be divided into such as ‘hold the Head,’ and such as do not; these last can in no sense be considered as entitled to the christian name, for what have they to do with Christianity who ‘count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing’? but the others, who hold the Head, even Christ, we rejoice to consider as Christians still, though Christians who suffer loss by the change they have made: For although they are still building upon the same glorious Foundation, they build thereon

not 'gold, silver, precious stones,' but 'wood, hay, stubble;' doctrines and discipline, rites and ceremonies, of the most flimsy and unprofitable kind, no ways calculated, or not so much calculated, to edify the soul in holiness of heart and life as those from which they have unhapily departed. They shall, therefore, 'suffer loss' in the day that shall '*try as by fire*' every man's work, of what sort it is, (see 1 Cor. iii. 11, 15,) though they themselves shall be saved in the day of the Lord.

With respect to those apostates from Methodism who have fallen into sin, and are living according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that ruleth in the children of disobedience; their case seems widely different from that of the preceding persons. Many of these, through the kindness of that good Spirit of God, whom they are daily grieving more and more, still revere in their hearts both the people and system of Methodism from which they unhappily departed in the dark and cloudy day. Their guilty passions alone have led them from God, and from those their former joys which they cannot remember but with heartfelt grief. Milton represents Eve, the first apostate on earth, as turning and looking with tears upon the groves of Eden, when banished by the angel from those sacred walks and delightful bowers where she had often met and conversed with God. In like manner do the apostates of whom I am now speaking often *turn and weep!* Methodism was to them an Eden. The Tree of Life, growing in the midst thereof, afforded them spiritual food, and through all her ordinances ran the pure river of the water of life, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb, and which yielded raptures to their

thirsty souls. But alas those joys are fled, vanished, gone—all have been abandoned for the poor unsatisfying enjoyment of sensuality and sin. In pursuing those inquiries which have necessarily been involved in collecting materials for writing this little narrative of the origin and progress of Methodism in these parts, the task has been generally most agreeable to my mind; but I am free to confess, although the number of pitiable backsliders is not greater, I believe, nor perhaps so great, in Lincoln and the Circuit, as in some other parts of kingdom, that my pleasure has often been broken, and its current interrupted, by the the instances of apostacy from God which I have met in those researches which I am now bringing to an end. I have too much concern and pity, and too much sincere respect, for persons of this description, ever to think of introducing their names into a work of this description; but when I have discovered the instances which have occurred, one in this place, another in that, and perhaps two or three in another, throughout the Circuit, it has often brought the language of the sacred writings respecting such persons most forcibly to my mind, where it is said, 'For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandments delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.' (2 Pet. ii. 20 ult).

Before I dismiss this particular, I must take the liberty of adding a word or two more. I should think myself wanting in duty to these persons, should I suffer this occasion to slip, and not seriously and strongly invite them to return to their God again. O my brethren—for such I would still call you, in the hope that I may yet see you, in time or eternity, restored to the favour of God again—O my brethren, for whom Christ died, and who have once been washed in the fountain of His blood, sin not away your day of mercy and grace. It is vain for me to wish for the tongues of angels to persuade you. More than that is actually employed in your behalf. God himself condescends to reason with and to invite you again to his forfeited favour and peace. ‘Return, O backsliding daughter,’ is His kind and melting language to you; with which, if you freely and fully comply, He assures you he will ‘heal your backslidings, and love you *freely*.’ More than this cannot be promised, more than this you cannot need. Do not then spurn, nor lightly esteem, nor delay, no, not a single hour, to embrace his last overtures of mercy and peace. Leave those idols, which death will force you very shortly to abandon, if nothing else can, leave them, I say, freely, and turn at once to your glorious Redeemer, the Shepherd and Bishop of the souls of men. Amen and Amen.

Let us now turn to a theme of a more pleasing description, I mean the number of preachers who have been raised up in the Lincoln Circuit, and sent out into the regular work of the ministry among the Methodists since Methodism first obtained a footing in these parts.

Perhaps it is a true observation, that genuine

patriotism will always give birth to great statesmen and to heroes, and that these characters rise less frequently in a nation, as the national virtues and genuine patriotism of the people decline. This remark will admit of an application to the rise and appearance of ministers in particular christian Societies, and in the whole Church of God. Deep and extensive piety will give birth to wise and useful ministers of the Gospel, and to missionaries, the heroes of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; and these, as genuine piety declines, and corruption and degeneracy grow up in the Church of God at large, will diminish in number from day to day, the Deity, in this case, withholding those special gifts and calling essential to a wise and efficient christian ministry, and in that, bestowing them more freely on the children of men. Hence in a low and very declining state of the Jewish Church the prophet said of Jerusalem, There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand of all the sons whom she hath brought up. The history of the Church under the Christian Dispensation will afford points of observation which appear to confirm the truth of these remarks. In the eighth century, when genuine piety was at an extremely low ebb, there were but few indeed who were capable of preaching the word of God, not even among those who had the title and situation of ministers of Christ; which, as it constituted the only necessity for homilies or written discourses, to be committed to memory, and repeated or read in the churches by the disqualified priests, gave rise at that period to the first *book* of homilies of which any mention appears to be made. Of this circumstance, Mosheim, the ecclesiastical

historian, has furnished the following account. 'Persuaded also that few of the clergy were capable of explaining with perspicuity and judgment the portions of scripture which are appointed in the ritual by the name of epistle and gospel, he (*Charlemagne*) ordered Paul Deacon and Alcuin to compile, from the ancient doctors of the church *homilies*, or discourses upon the epistles and gospels, which a stupid and ignorant set of priests were to commit to memory, and recite to the people. (Vol. ii. p. 153.) Under very similar circumstances the *Book of Homilies* of our national church were drawn up in the sixteenth century by Archbishop Cranmer, who probably would never have given it one thought, had not his laudable zeal for the good of the people, and the instruction of perishing millions, together with the miserable ignorance of a great part of the priesthood of this nation at that time, especially in the smaller towns and country places, rendered the measure necessary as the best he could think of to supply the exigencies of the case. But as the true spirit of piety and religion increased, true ministers of Christ, called and qualified of God for their high and holy employment, increased also, and have continued to increase with the increase of the spirit of piety even to this day.

And hence, perhaps, one might venture to draw the following conclusion, that the number of men, called and qualified by God to labour in the spiritual 'harvest' from any particular district or portion of Country, might justly be regarded as one of the criterions whereby we might form an opinion of the breadth and depth of genuine piety in that country or place. Should these reflections be

just, or if they are allowed to be probable only, and not certain, they will yield no mean idea of the piety of the Wesleyan Societies in the Neighbourhood and City of Lincoln, when we have taken into our account those ministers of Jesus who have at different periods risen among them, many of whom are still gloriously toiling in the widely extended field of God.

The number and talents of the itinerant preachers sent out from Lincoln Circuit do no ordinary credit to the place and people who sent them forth, and their labours have already been extensively useful to the church of God. The first of these men, in point of time, if my materials be correct, is the Rev. D. Isaac, at present the superintendent of the Hull Circuit and chairman of that District. The talents of Mr. Isaac have long been highly appreciated, both as a writer and minister of the word of God. In 1809 he published a valuable little volume, of which the following is the title: The doctrine of Universal Restoration examined and refuted; being an answer to the most important particulars contained in the writings of Messrs. Winchester, Vidler, Wright, and Weaver. His next production is a work on The exclusive claims of the clergy of the established Church; which, with his usual talent and energy of thought, he examines and rejects. It was printed in Scotland, and was not, I believe, so generally sold in England as his next production, a valuable work on infant baptism, in opposition to the anti-pædobaptism of the present day. Latterly he has published a pamphlet against the use of instrumental music in places of public worship, entitled Vocal Melody; or singing the only music sanctioned

by Divine Authority in the public worship of christians. The style of Mr. Isaac's writing is concise and clear, unencumbered with epithets; and his method of discussing a subject, cool and strong.

The Rev. R. Watson is next in order. He is now superintendent of the Manchester Circuit, was for some time one of the general secretaries of our Missionary Society, and has been once President of our Conference. Mr. Watson, besides sermons and smaller productions, including a series of valuable Catechisms for children and young people, has published *A Defence of the Wesleyan Missions in the West Indies*: including a refutation of the charges in Mr. Marryat's *Thoughts on the abolition of the Slave Trade, &c.*, and in other publications; with facts and anecdotes illustrative of the moral state of the Slaves, and of the operations of Missions—a work, from the perusal of which no person who detests wickedness, or whose heart ever throbbed at the tale of human sufferings and human wrongs, can rise with a tearless eye.—Observations on Southey's "*Life of Wesley*;" being a Defence of the character, labours, and opinions of Mr. Wesley, against the misrepresentations of that publication,—is another valuable production of Mr. Watson, in which the plumes of the Lauret wave to the superior honours of Mr. Watson's pen. Besides these works Mr. Watson has given to the world a work entitled, *The Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures demonstrated*; and another work, in 3 vols. 8vo. entitled, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. As a preacher, the talents of Mr. Watson are unrivalled. The style of his writings is generally very elevated, yet chaste and clear; always swelling with thought, yet, by

an inimitable felicity in his choice and arrangement of words, never thrown into eddies, or broken into cataracs, by the unevenness of the channel in which it rolls along.—I venture these remarks on the productions of these two great men with trembling and unaffected diffidence; but as they are the fruits of Methodism, and of Methodism at Lincoln, of which I have undertaken to give an account, this history would have been defective had they been passed over in silence, and I felt unwilling to mention them at all without expressing at least something of the opinion respecting them which existed in my own mind. I had much rather that my reader would examine the productions for himself than be satisfied of their excellence upon the authority of word.

In addition to the preceding, Methodism has sent from this circuit the following ministers of Jesus Christ; namely, the Rev. Messrs. John Bedford, (who, after travelling some years, returned and settled at Lincoln, and is now a respectable leader and local preacher among us,) Thomas Padman, Frederick Calder, William Bacon, John Hannah, (Author of two sermons, published in 1824, on occasion of the death of Mr. and Mrs. Gregory, of Nottingham; and of the Life of the Rev. D. Stoner — works of a promising pen, and calculated to be useful,) William Goy, Joseph Watson, and Samuel Tindall. Some of these men have been much longer in the ministry than the rest, but none of them quite so long as the two preceding, and their characters as preachers of the Gospel, and their labours, have done much credit to this Circuit,

which sent them out, and been very useful to the general cause and people of God. If Methodism in these parts had produced no other effect than that of raising these devoted and able ministers of Jesus Christ, the time, the labours, and expense, annually bestowed upon it from the time it first visited the neighbourhood until now, would have been well employed, and its patrons and promoters entitled to their just meed of praise.

I may conclude this particular by the remark, that in addition to the preceding, a respectable and useful list of local preachers who are also the fruits of Methodism, have been raised up in these parts from time to time, and that the mine of mind is not and will not be exhausted so long as the stream of piety shall continue to fertilize and enrich the soil.

Another subject to be mentioned in this chapter is that of the Sunday Schools in this circuit—a very important and efficient instrument which Methodism has employed as an auxiliary of the public ministry of the gospel, and with a great and growing effect. I shall first give a general account of their origin and present condition, and afterwards add a few cursory remarks.

The Lincoln Society commenced their benevolent Sunday School exertions about the year 1806, as was observed page 64 of this narrative. This first beginning was in a room by the water side; but they afterwards removed the scene of their labours to the Banks, a new School-room having been built there for their accommodation. A second School was afterwards established Up Hill, where Methodism gathered a number of little ones under her wings, to teach them the things which belonged to their peace; and a third School in this City was com-

menced Down Street, but, for want of a convenient room, it was afterwards given up. About 300 children have been regularly taught the principles of Christianity from sabbath to sabbath throughout the year in these schools, and to the superior scholars writing also is taught during one evening in the week.—North Scarle commenced their sabbath School exertions much about the same time as Lincoln. Afterwards, however, their School needed much improvement, but is now efficiently taught, and contains every child in the village (120 in number) of the proper age to be admitted.—Aubourn School was begun in 1810, in a large room in Aubourn Hall; but it was afterwards removed to the Chapel, where it is well and efficiently conducted to the present day.—Eagle is said to have been set on foot soon after Aubourn, but was dull and languid till sometime afterwards. It is now doing well. The year 1815 gave rise to the Bassingham Sunday School. It was set on foot in the kitchen of the dwelling of one of our friends. A barn, fitted up for the purpose, was its next scene of operation; and in this place it prospered until the year 1826, when a good airy room was built on purpose to accommodate it in its benevolent designs. Average number of scholars about 100.—Harby; this School was set on foot about the year 1815, and continues its operations; but the teachers complain of the unruliness of their boys.—A School was set on foot at Welton in 1816, and some time ago it contained about 100 scholars. But it is now, for the present, entirely given up.—The School at Girton was begun in 1817, and about the same time, and since that period, Schools have successively made their appearance at Ingham, Newton, Stapleford, South Clifton, Nettleham, Langworth, Saxilby, Skellingthorpe, Heighington, and Branston;

all which continue to the present ; and others have more recently sprung up at Waddington, Swindery, South Hykham, and Thorpe on the Hill. So that in all this Circuit there is scarcely a village in which Methodism has erected her standard which has not its own separate and efficient Sunday School, well regulated and taught from week to week and from year to year by a competent number of duly qualified male and female teachers, who instruct all that come, and without any fee or hope of the smallest pecuniary reward,

I may now observe respecting these Schools as follows: *First*, That, in the present state of things, in which so much ignorance and neglect of their children, and, I may add, want of ability to instruct them, on the part of numbers of parents, exists in the neighbourhood, the springing up of so many institutions to impart religious instruction and moral principles to the minds of the juvenile part of the community, is one of the most pleasing objects that can present itself to the mind of him who loves his Country and his God. If those who are guilty of the greatest crimes among the lower order of society are chiefly such as have received little or no moral and religious instruction from their parents or others—a fact which few will be disposed to deny—these Institutions must have a salutary effect upon the public morals and good order of society at large, as well as on the eternal interests of many of the children of men ; and on these grounds under the present state of things are entitled to the patronage and support of every good man.

Second, My next remark respecting Sunday Schools is of a different description ; and I must beg the reader, especially the Sunday School teacher,

not to be startled when he hears me say, that, as Sunday Schools are in one sense a reproach to the nation, as well as in another sense the glory of it, so I look forward to the period when they shall all be done away; and, if I am not greatly mistaken, I see that in the Sunday School system which is annually contributing towards the destruction of it and towards its total abolition from the children of men. A few additional remarks will make this matter clear and plain. Let the reader then reflect, that if every christian parent were qualified and disposed to do his duty to his own tender offspring, that is, to instruct them to read their Bible, and teach them the principles of religion, in their own houses at home on the Lord's day — a thing which is actually done by some humble but truly pious christian parents in this Circuit — there would then be no need at all for so much as a single Sunday School in the whole land. And who does not see that it would be infinitely better for us as a nation, and more honourable to our christian profession, if every father and mother were able and willing thus to instruct their own children at home, and make their own house a sort of little sabbath School, rather than that their little ones should be under the necessity of receiving this benefit from the hands of other persons? To me it is a lovely sight to see the pious Sunday School Teacher leading the bands of children under his care into the House of God; but it is much more lovely to see the pious father and mother leading their own little ones by the hand into that sacred place where God is publicly adored, after they have spent a portion of time in giving them instruction at home; and if our own people generally, or such of them as are able, would properly attend to this duty, withdraw-

ing their children from the School Institution, they would set an example worthy of imitation through the land. As things now are, a considerable number of persons are detained every sabbath from the house of prayer, during one part of the day. The negligence of many parents, and the ignorance of others, render it needful; and it is better that this should be done than that those forlorn children should remain untaught, and darkness and sin be perpetuated in the land; for of two evils we should always choose the less. But I hail the approach of that period when light and truth and grace shall so far prevail in the nation, and when piety shall so rule in the hearts of the children of men, that the necessity I have been speaking of shall come to an end. May the Lord hasten it in his time.

We may now proceed to another subject of very pleasing reminiscence which has already arisen out of Methodism in these parts, and which indeed is the great end for which it has been supported and carried on from the first day of its appearing in this neighbourhood until now; I mean the number of happy deaths which have taken place in the Circuit during the last thirty or forty years. I do not, indeed, intend to make mention of names, or to give any account of the experience and death of particular persons, any further than has already been done in the preceding parts of this work; but to observe in general, that by means of the preaching of the Gospel, and other means of grace among us, many souls, in various situations in life, and of both sexes, have been happily awakened to a sense of their sinfulness and danger, led to seek pardon and salvation by faith in a crucified Saviour, obtained forgiveness and adoption into the family of God, were regenerated

or born again of the Spirit, entirely sanctified and made holy, and, finally, received into the presence of God above. The consistent and holy lives, as well as the peaceful, and, in some cases, triumphant deaths of those we are now speaking of, leave no gloomy doubt, no cold and shivering apprehension, on the minds of their surviving friends, as to the truth and certainty of the preceding statement; so that while yet in this present world of sin and sorrow their spirits, borne on the wing of delightful contemplation, and assisted by the light of that faith which can look into the regions of bliss, they can behold their former companions in glory, and, by a strong and lively hope, participate their joy. And having thus, in tracing the happy effects of Methodism in these parts, followed the persons referred to above into the regions of immortality, we may justly pause for one moment, and muse upon their now glorious and everlasting state.

While strangers and sojourners on the earth they were surrounded with many clouds of darkness on many subjects in which they felt themselves to be greatly interested, and respecting which they often wished to know more than they were permitted to know while on earth; for to them the dispensations of Providence were often mysterious and intricate, and the scheme of redemption by Christ Jesus was not fully revealed, and heaven itself, the place whither they were going, the country they were seeking, was little known. But now they need not, they use not as formerly the language of the Apostle, 'we know in part;' for the dimming veil, and the distance, are fled, and light and enrapturing approximation have made all things plain and clear, while, filled with unutterable delight, and lost in wonder, they exclaim, '*now we know even as we are known.*'

While here below some of them were often the subjects of pain and distress, both of body and mind. Wearisome days and nights were appointed to them, and soothing slumber, though solicited with sighs, fled from them, and lighted on 'lids unsullied with a tear.' Some of my readers will remember those suffering scenes of their former companions of which I am now making mention, having been partakers with them in some of their distresses. But now where are their bitter sighs and heart-rending sorrows fled? May we not sing with the poet the following delightful stanzas as applicable to each individual of them,

'How blest is our brother, bereft
Of all that could burden his mind!
How easy the soul that has left
The wearisome body behind!
Of evil incapable, thou
Whose relics with envy I see,
No longer in misery now,
No longer a sinner like me'!

Yes, they are 'of evil incapable; for, in heaven,

'No slightest touch of pain,
Or sorrow's least alloy,
Can violate their rest, or stain
Their purity of joy.'

But great as is the felicity of an everlasting freedom from all bodily pain and mental anguish, it is not the sum, it is by no means the total, of the happiness of heaven. Religion prepares the mind for the sublimest enjoyments of a positive and spiritual nature, and heaven has in it enjoyments for minds so prepared. Lofty as is the language of the sacred writers in their descriptions of heaven, we must remember it falls far short of being a full and ample representation. It is adapted to the poverty and narrowness of our present dark conceptions; it leads us as far as our minds can go, and, doubtless, could we have comprehended more, more would have

been revealed. A country where grows the tree of life, and runs in crystal floods the water of life, flowing from the throne of God; a city paved with gold, and shining with the glory of God—where there is no need of the sun or the moon to enlighten it—abounding with everlasting mansions for the followers of Jesus; robes of snowy whiteness, and long and lasting processions of crowned victors bearing palms in their hands, attended in their march through the imperial city above by harpers playing on harps of gold to the songs of the triumphant multitudes redeemed out of every nation and people under heaven: All this language and whatever else there is of the same kind in the page of revealed truth, is faint and feeble, adapted to our present capacities, and falls infinitely short of soaring to the felicity of heaven. ‘WE SHALL SEE HIS FACE’—‘WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS!’ These expressions, though subject to the same remarks as the preceding, come, perhaps, the nearest of any to a just description of the everlasting happiness of the saints of God.

To this eternal ‘weight of glory’ Methodism, which, as I have before observed, is but another word for the religion of Jesus, has conducted those her sons and daughters of whom I now write; so that many individuals who will peruse the pages I am now dictating as a feeble monument of what God has wrought in this City and neighbourhood, will be able to say, each one to his or her companion.

‘And thou shalt there an husband meet,
And I a parent there.’

Yes, we also shall walk with Christ in white, and shall mingle with blood-washed throng. with the Church of the firstborn, and see him ‘whom angels dimly see;’ and

‘A day without night we shall spend in his sight,
And eternity seem as a day.’

Let us then, my friends and companions—for I now speak to you who are the living fruits of Methodism in this City and surrounding places—let us, I say, ‘gird up the loins of our minds, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.’

I shall now descend from the bright abodes and mansions of glory to the things which are here below, and offer a few remarks on the present spiritual state of the Societies in general in this Circuit, respecting whom it is not flattery, it is doing no more than we have examples in the sacred Scriptures for doing, when we say, in the language of an apostle, ‘We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth; So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure.’ To the praise of our God be it spoken, that the stream of piety still runs in the Lincoln Circuit, not indeed, like a mountain torrent amidst rocks, noisy and shallow here, deep, yet whirling and foamy there, and now and then gliding smooth and clear along; it has presented, even from the commencement, a more regular and uniform aspect and character, and flows with a calm and even majesty unto the present day. There has seldom been any very extraordinary or remarkable revival in the Lincoln Circuit, such, I mean, as those that have sometimes attended the progress of Methodism in some other place; but the experience of the people is not less marked, genuine, or deep, on that account. In our class-meetings, lovefeasts, and other meetings of the kind, we find the conver-

sions of the people, whether those of the old standards or of the younger members, to have been of the most genuine and Scriptural kind; preceded by sorrow for sin, sought by earnest prayer, obtained by faith in the atoning blood of the Redeemer, accompanied by the immediate and direct witness of the Spirit assuring them of their pardon and acceptance in the Beloved, and followed by good works. A growth in grace succeeds, and there have not been wanting, and there are not now wanting, living witnesses that 'the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sin.' As the pleasing fruit of all this we might just notice, in addition to what has been previously stated in this volume, the peace and harmony which have generally prevailed in the Circuit, the cordial love of the people towards each other, zeal for the glory of God, and their kindness to their preachers, which is genuine, uniform, and strong.

I now come, in the last place, to the future prospects of Methodism, respecting which my remarks must be very brief. And here, with the facts already before me—with a thousand members scattered over the face of the neighbourhood, containing local preachers, class-leaders, Sunday School teachers, tract distributors, and the like, who are daily endeavouring to do good, as I here presume they will constantly do, and that the rest of the members who are not employed in any such way, will study to adorn their holy profession by holiness and meekness of conduct and conversation, by gentleness, by goodness, by faith, by charity, and by temperance, by the works of faith, by the labour of love, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, letting their light so shine before men that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven—supposing, I say, that the

